

Hoosiers on the Hardwood:
A Critical Examination of Indiana Basketball Culture and its Effect on Identity Formation

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the nexus at which Indiana basketball and the state's 'hoosier' identity meet. More specifically, this thesis interrogates the romanticization of this sporting culture for its pedagogical role in the creation of twenty-first century 'hoosier' bodies. Adopting a theoretical orientation rooted in critical race theory, I argue that Indiana's basketball culture represents a normalized / normalizing structure underneath which Otherness is reified to produce hypervisible "different" outsiders ('non-hoosiers'), and invisible "disciplined" insiders (i.e. 'hoosiers'). Utilizing data gleaned over a two-month period spent conducting fieldwork in the "hoosier state" (document analysis, unstructured interviewing, and participant observation), I specifically tailor my analysis to uncover people's understanding, negotiation, and performance of this regional and national subject position. From this point of inquiry, authentic 'hoosiness' comes to be represented, known, practiced, and felt in relation to hierarchies of power that privilege white, hypermasculine, rural, and conservative bodies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The autumn breeze is crisp, but surprisingly refreshing to the farmboy who has just finished his daily chores. Leaves of all colours gently trickle across the dirt driveway, kicking up tiny particles of dust that slowly dissipate into thin air. The earthy red, pumpkin orange and mustard yellow tones of the October landscape effortlessly compliment the brown, worn-out leather basketball that sits afront an old wooden barn. As the boy leans over to pick up the ball, the barn is transformed – it becomes the weathered backboard to an elevated and rusting iron rim. There is no mesh; and no officially bounded square aside from an amorphous discolouration to map the backboard's "sweet spot." And as the boy – almost automatically – begins to shoot layups from each side of the hoop, he adds to the faded discolourment of this wooded area. Shot with the right amount of force, those attempts making contact with the increasingly white blotch result in success. It has become so deeply engrained in his thinking that he does not consciously reflect on this fact until the ball hits beyond the white zone. A miss! And, in many ways – a symbolic representation of the "hoosier" identity.

Small town imagery of young, Indiana farmers playing basketball on the sides of barns has become a commonplace representation of the state's culture. Rearticulated through popular mediums such as film, literature, and news; citizens from the unofficially nicknamed "hoosier state" are well aware of their ties to the sport. Mottos such as: "In 49 states, it's just basketball...but this is Indiana" (proudly displayed by the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame) and "There are two seasons in Indiana: There is basketball season and getting ready for basketball season" (Jones, 2005, p. 1) serve to reinforce this fact. But what is meant by this cultural affiliation for the sport of basketball?

Many nations and states use sport as a homogenizing structure to produce a particular identity for its citizens (Abdel-Shehid, 2005). Countries, provinces/states, and cities grasp onto these sports as important cultural symbols, and similarly imbue them with particular meanings. It is important to therefore question the histories and politics that shape these understandings as they often reproduce inequalities that persist in the broader political sphere. In many cases (e.g. Indiana and basketball; Canada and hockey; Texas and football) these cultural identities are casually asserted to be nothing more than a nostalgic, glorified, and romanticized part of the nation/state's history. However, there is a great need for academics to problematize the unique meanings attributed to, and extracted from these sports by normalizing populations within nations/states. Who are the privileged voices in determining and regulating these interpretations? How do certain populations of people stand to benefit from these conceptions? And, most importantly, who is left beyond the boundaries of this normalized identity; and what does it mean for those groups of people?

In this vein, Indiana's basketball obsession must be placed underneath a critical light. The grand narrative which continues to appropriate imagery of white, small town, blue collar farmboys as the real embodiment of a "hoosier basketball aesthetic" results in deeper meanings that are reified in both the cultural and political spheres. There exists a distortion and romanticization of the racism and whiteness responsible for the structuration of Indiana's basketball culture today. And, as representations of these nostalgic histories continue to be widely popularized and embraced by the state's overwhelmingly white population, the underlying question behind this study asks: what effects do these racial power dynamics have on people's lives?

Within and beyond academic sport scholarship, there have been some attempts by authors and scholars to map the racial landscape of Indiana basketball's history (Briley, 2005; Jones, 2005; Lane, 2007; Paino, 2001; Pierce, 2000; Wertheim, 2005). Serving as a useful entry point to deconstruct basketball's symbolic value to Indianans, these works fall short from ever theorizing basketball's cultural impact on the material realities of those subject to its power. In other words, the history is provided to give people a better understanding for what shapes Indiana's present context; yet little has been done to understand the real life experiences of those who benefit or hurt from these conditions. Furthermore, the phenomenon (as outlined in the extant literature) is largely explained in terms that do not move beyond the sporting realm, as opposed to rightfully positioning its significance underneath a broader political umbrella. That is to say, the term 'hoosier' has been overlooked by commentators thus far. And since Indianans contemporaneously produce themselves (or become produced) as 'hoosiers', research must begin to examine how meanings within and beyond sport interactively engage to construct this identity.

Indiana's 'hoosier' identity represents a complex intersection of citizenship, ideology, politics, and culture. With the contemporary understanding that being 'hoosier' is closely intertwined with the sport of basketball, my interest is in further exploring how the racialized histories of this sport, state, and word combine to produce meaningful subjectivities upon Indiana's citizenry. Historiographically and culturally, whiteness is a privileged, celebrated, and romanticized part of these 'hoosier' politics. Thus, the purpose of this study is to critically examine Indiana's basketball culture to understand the way(s) people learn; make sense of; embody, regulate, and/or contest this invisible 'hoosier' whiteness both on and off the basketball court. Fieldwork strategies are called upon to

formulate an analysis and provide a deep appreciation for the ways lived realities become conceptualized and experienced by individuals. As such, the ‘hoosier’ identity is ruptured to expose a messy set of inconvenient vitals that require one’s attention.

In the following chapter, I outline a theoretical framework rooted in critical race theory and critical white studies to rightfully situate this project’s arguments.

Additionally, a review of literature related to the intersections of sport, racialized masculinities, representation and the nation/state serves to ground many of the themes called upon throughout this work. In chapter three, I attempt to explain and justify my epistemological framework and provide specific methodological details concerning the sorts of investigative research practices utilized herein. A total of fifteen participants partook in unstructured interviews which, combined with document analysis, served as the basis for inquiry. In chapter four, I begin to interrogate the historical and contemporary discursive formations of Indiana’s ‘hoosier’ identity, paying close attention to the racialized undertones located therein. Informed by this knowledge, chapter five then looks to explore the pedagogical function of Indiana’s basketball culture in teaching one about ‘hoosierness’. Specific attention is afforded to people’s negotiations with, and performance of a ‘hoosier’ identity on the hardwood. Lastly, chapter six offers my concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from the body of critical legal studies in the mid-1970s as a way to challenge and critique the more subtle forms of racism that began to manifest after the Civil Rights movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Since then, it has continued to evolve as a transdisciplinary tool that has powerfully shaped and informed a wide body of scholarship from a variety of academic disciplines. This sense of ‘transdisciplinarity’ is precisely what has allowed CRT scholars to interrogate the complex nature of ‘race’ and racism with considerable flexibility and freedom. That is to say, researchers working from a CRT perspective are encouraged to move beyond traditional theoretical, methodological, and epistemological frames commonly purported within their discipline so as to account for racism’s intricate and interdependent nature. In so doing, CRT can become “an ontological starting point for the study of sport today” (Hylton, 2009, p. 22).

This ontological disposition, it is argued, recognizes the importance of ‘race’ as it functions to shape our understanding of sport as a social institution. As is the case with any other institution, sport provides a means for ‘race’ to become reified; maintaining and perpetuating racist stereotypes, hierarchies, structures, ideologies, etc. Yet, to fully appreciate this ontology, CRT advocates a reconceptualization of ‘race’ away from its static nature and towards a social constructionist viewpoint: “Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). The term ‘racialization’ is subsequently invoked to capture this sentiment, as it accounts for the fluid and precarious landscape through which ‘race’ derives its signified

meaning. More importantly, racialized identities are also conceptualized to exist within a much larger, multidimensional and interdependent system of subordination that includes (but is not limited to) gender, class, sexuality, age, and disability (hooks, 2004; Hylton, 2009). These additional categories serve to further validate a constructionist view of racialized identity, requiring that researchers embrace CRT's multidisciplinary grounding in order to comprehensively analyze oppressive structures of domination.

Intersections of Racialized Masculinity

Cultural critic, bell hooks, has continued to reinforce the intersectionality of identity throughout her works as being fundamental to discerning and overcoming systems of oppression. She commonly makes reference to an “imperialist, White supremacist, capitalist patriarchy” to firmly establish the interconnectedness through which such forces operate and exert power over the identity of its subjects. In her examination of black masculinity, hooks (2004) elucidates this concept by first acknowledging capitalism's omnipotent existence within North America. She argues that an unethical, value-less focus on money, greed, and material goods are the direct result of capitalist thinking, and have unfortunately become entangled with hegemonic masculinities. In other words, to be a man is to fall in line with classic patriarchal thought that espouses the need for males to act as providers – which, under capitalism's ubiquitous logic, maintains a strong financial bend insomuch that money represents power. Black males, she argues, come to articulate an identity rooted in capitalist patriarchy when they assume what she refers to as a ‘gangsta persona’: “Gangsta culture is the essence of patriarchal masculinity” (hooks, 2004, p. 26).

Therefore, black male identity as it becomes constructed through gangsta culture, has at the same time internalized the white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy that hooks (2004) seeks to contest: “Lots of young black men are walking around assuming a gangsta persona who have never and will never commit violent acts. Yet they collude with violent patriarchal culture by assuming this persona and perpetuating the negative racist/sexist stereotype that says “all black men are carriers of the violence we dread”” (p. 52). In turn, this embodied form of racialized masculinity is particularly misleading, in that it gives one the illusion of power based upon the consumption of assets, domination of women, and creation of fear in others. In actuality, however, it does nothing more than corporealize the desires of a racist white imaginary that upholds a vested interest in the subjugation of “untamed, uncivilized, unthinking, and unfeeling” black men (hooks, 2004, p. x). Hooks articulates the impositions this white/normalizing gaze places upon its black subjects, and notes the difficulty with which most men come to avoid such categorization in their quest for self-determination. Instead, many “black males put on their ghetto minstrel show” (hooks, 2004, p. 40) for white people who expect them to fall within such predetermined subjectivities that connote a terrain that is “all body and no mind” (hooks, 2004, p. 38).

Harry Edwards (2010) further expounds upon this form of racialized masculinity by highlighting its intrinsically classed structure, and offers insight as to how this has functioned within the context of sport. He argues that by the 1980s, an important bifurcation within black America took place, whereby gangsta culture (embraced by the poor, underclass) was projected as the authentic representation of black masculinity in that it portrayed “the hard realities of the communities that the black middle class left

behind” (p. 68). As hooks (2003) reaffirms, a false dichotomy was established (and continues to be accepted) that “implied that the real black people were those on the bottom and the fake black people were those whose lives most closely resembled successful white peers” (p. 123-124). Through popularized representations (e.g., the music and film industries, professional sports, etc.) a new generation of youth were exposed to these images and began to collectively embrace its connotative white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal message. This has resulted in what Edwards (2010) refers to as a “modelling reversal” in sport: “Athletes had become less models for youths in the community than youths in the community had become models for athletes” (p. 69). This pressure to “keep it real,” working in conjunction with several other forces in sport¹, has led to what Edwards perceives as the deterioration of the black athlete. Not only has such deterioration evinced from a statistical perspective², but a deeper moral and symbolic deterioration has taken place; requiring a “re-channeling [of] black youths’ perspectives and values relative to those ‘powerful personalities’ that model their aspirations and goals” (Edwards, 2010, p. 71).

However, Edwards’s claims rest on two important assumptions that have served as a site for contention amongst scholars. First of all, one must be willing to accept that collegiate and professional sporting spheres provide black masculinities with a viable realm to produce alternative identities; while, simultaneously engaging audiences on a similar path towards socio-political awareness and trajectories of self-actualization.

While this may have been the case for athletes participating during the Civil Rights era,

¹ Edwards makes note of the increasingly powerful force of globalization in sport, combined with changing structures in both the US collegiate and professional sport structures.

² Edwards provides statistical support to suggest the declining influence of Black athletes in US professional sport; and juxtaposes them with increasing numbers of Black males in prison, killed by gunfire, etc. (markers of gangsta culture, racialized masculinity)

as Edwards (1969) can attest to; bell hooks (2004) approaches the contemporary professional sporting environment with far more skepticism:

Playing professional sports was a primary work arena for black men to both assert patriarchal manhood or a humanist-based selfhood and make money. Today that arena has become so corrupted by the politics of materialist greed that it is rarely a location where an alternative masculinity rooted in dignity and selfhood can emerge (p. 21).

In other words, an air of capitalist patriarchal thinking has always remained concealed as part of this domain (perhaps, not surprisingly given its professionalized and physicalized essence), and has progressively worsened over time.³ Furthermore, sport's innate capacity to accentuate the body has been perceived by some scholars as serving the desires of the racist white imaginary. Hoberman (1997) expands on this notion by engaging with the law of compensation, "which postulates an inverse relationship between mind and muscle, between athletic and intellectual development" (p. 225). This thought process, he argues, has continuously worked alongside colonialist racial folklore to unconsciously construct a biological fantasy of the "physically superior" black body as Other. As such, he might suggest that a declining black representation and/or dominance in sport could actually work to mitigate white supremacist projections of an athleticized (and, thereby intellectually inferior) racialized masculinity.

The second point of disjuncture from Edwards's (and hooks's) claims rests in the assumption that hip-hop or gangsta culture is problematic to begin with. While the two are often interrelated, some argue that it is unreasonable to lump hip hop in with the

³ Edwards (2010) argues that it has come to infect the identities of children participating in amateur sport from a young age.

commercialized, commodified images of patriarchal masculinity embodied in the ‘gangsta persona’. Dyson (1996) suggests that hip-hop, as an art form, has been unfairly targeted in an exclusionary manner by intellectuals. Instead, Dyson believes we must pay closer attention to what is happening within America on a much larger scale to examine “urban social policies, economic practices, and political measures aimed at black communities and black youth” (p. 147). In so doing, he conceives of a *juvenocracy* having developed in America’s urban communities:

For me, a juvenocracy is the domination of black and Latino domestic and urban life by mostly male figures under the age of 25 who wield considerable economic, social, and moral influence. A juvenocracy may consist of drug gangs, street crews, loosely organized groups, and individual youths who engage in illicit activity. They operate outside the bounds of the moral and political economies of traditional homes and neighborhoods (p. 140 – 141).

Dyson argues that, while it may be convenient to associate the behaviour of these juvenocrats with the messages and images that are commonly represented within hip-hop culture, it is unfair and overly-simplistic to do so. Hip-hop, as an art form, is far more complex and meaningful than what is often portrayed in the mainstream media. In fact, as hooks (1992) contends, the (commodified) images of phallocentric black masculinity that are most often projected in music, film, television, etc. coincide with white supremacist beliefs to pathologize and subsequently gain support for a white attack on black youth. But, the concept of a *juvenocracy* is much less concerned with such images as they work to reify a racialized, patriarchal and classed sense of manhood. Instead, it turns its

attention to much broader socio-political and socio-economic issues within America: a pervading narrative of violence, a political economy of drugs, and a deep cultural adulation for the gun. These factors comprising the *juvenocracy* encourage and depend upon a repetitive engagement in illicit activities, and are largely to blame for the nihilism and “moral viciousness of juvenocrats” (Dyson, 1996, p. 147). However, that is not to say this ethic is specifically racialized, classed, or gendered for lower-class, black men. Rather, Dyson posits that it is all too symptomatic of an American ethic (or, even a universal one) that has been unfairly attributed to black youth due to a “cultural fascination with, and revulsion to [their] pop culture” (Dyson, 1996, p. 148). Thus, an appreciation for *juvenocratic* factors in shaping one’s identity must be taken in conjunction with the influence of hip-hop or gangsta culture.

Some scholars, such as Boyd (1997), even go so far as to defend hip hop or gangsta culture insomuch that it represents a means to resist (white and middle-class) power. Though such an assertion certainly lacks a love ethic whilst simultaneously ignoring a feminist critique; Boyd (1997) believes a “nigga identity” is internalized by some black men as a means for opposing the dominant culture:

The modern-day “nigga,” having come to prominence through several cultural arenas including rap music, African American cinema, and professional sports, equally defies aspects of mainstream white culture, as well as the at times restrictive dimensions of status quo Black culture (p. 31).

Boyd further elaborates that such an identity is rooted in the articulation of values that relate to a black, underclass lifestyle. This conceptualization of racialized masculinity

subsequently places class at the forefront of analysis by preserving a belief in the authenticity and “coolness” of lower-class, black life as it stands in defiance of mainstream, middle-class, white culture. But, as bell hooks (2004) would contest, it is an identity that is neither real nor cool; and more importantly, one that works to reinscribe and reinforce imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal values (by glamorizing violence, subjugating women, and emphasizing material gain). Consequently, without any definite answers as to how and why racialized masculinities assume their contemporary form, one must be fully prepared to embrace the tensions, ambiguity, multivocal, and intersecting complexity located therein.

The Fallacy of Colour-Blindness

Alongside the notion of intersectionality, CRT also maintains that liberalist narratives of colour-blindness and race-neutrality be challenged to understand racism’s ordinariness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Hylton, 2009). Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumanchery-Luik (2004) also refer to this phenomenon as “democratic racism” to illuminate the veiled racist discourse which has come to invidiously embed itself as commonplace within contemporary conceptions of democracy. They further explain:

Because Western society is dedicated to the philosophical proposition that individuals are rewarded solely on the basis of merit and that no individual or group is ever singled out for discriminatory treatment, the truth of oppression is functionally sidestepped while appearing consistent with the discourse of liberal democracy. Again, in these democratically racist contexts, those who experience oppression and suffer its material-non-material consequences are positioned as somehow responsible for their state of being (p. 110).

Under this larger discursive framework, ‘race’ and racism are no longer seen to exist in modern-day society. In fact, while democracy overwhelmingly concerns itself with economic terms – socio-political initiatives aimed towards achieving social equity are met with skepticism and abhorrence. Beginning in the 1980s with Ronald Reagan’s economically-driven administration, such thinking has continued to persist well into the twenty first century to persuade people into “thinking away” matters which pertain to ‘race’. Dangerously then, institutionalized racism has managed to surreptitiously evolve in the minds of the privileged and the structures of the past without any such recognition. Those with power continue to exert their oppressive and powerful force upon a voiceless minority who are framed as overly-sensitive, unwilling, or captious in their objections. And, since equity-measures (e.g., affirmative action) are widely utilized to combat overt, systemic forms of discrimination; the privileged are deluded from recognizing the ways in which racism comes to operate in more covert, intrapersonal and interpersonal forms. Therefore, it is one of the central tenets of CRT that researchers look beyond the masquerade of colour-blindness; to unconceal what has remained a concealed set of racialized assumptions.

Whiteness

These racialized assumptions, as they appear in the CRT literature, are commonly referred to as whiteness. Acting as an unquestioned site of privilege, whiteness preserves an inordinate degree of normalcy. Yet, its capacity to advantageously operate beneath the protective grand narrative of race-neutrality further abstracts and conceals its incendiary and invisible presence from ever being problematized. Not surprisingly, then, CRT is also interested in exposing whiteness as a social construction: “Whiteness is a form of self-

identity and a marker of material, political, symbolic and psychological worth. It is against this worth that the oppressed are measured and examined, thereby turning the economy of visibility into an exercise of power” (Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004, p. 92).

In this respect, it is worthwhile to begin conceptualizing whiteness as it becomes embodied as part of this “economy of visibility.” German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1977), serves as a useful starting point to articulate this process, as he wrote passionately on the essence of being. Without directly speaking to the topic of whiteness, he recognized how beings often remain concealed from expressing or realizing their whole selves within traditional ontological frameworks. Thus, he argued in favour of a new ontic position designed to illuminate the essence of truth, termed *alētheia*:

If we translate *alētheia* as ‘unconcealment’ rather than ‘truth,’ this translation is not merely more literal; it contains the directive to rethink the ordinary concept of truth in the sense of the correctness of statements and to think it back to that still uncomprehended disclosedness and disclosure of beings. To engage oneself with the disclosedness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are and in order that presentative correspondence might take its standard from them (pp. 127-128).

Consistent with such thinking, privileged beings can remain largely ignorant to their own concealed whiteness. And, given the role history has afforded in normalizing its influence, it is rather unsurprising that whiteness has maintained an air of invisibility

(particularly under modern day discourse of colour-blind individualism). Therefore, Heidegger's words clearly delineate a critical means for exposing the truth from which privileged, white bodies make their assumptions and decisions. To ignore the ways in which such judgments are racialized and/or informed by whiteness merely distorts the totality of the subject's being.

However, as Heidegger (1977) also noted: "Concealment can be a refusal or merely a dissembling. We are never fully certain whether it is the one or the other" (p. 176). That is to say, whiteness as it exists as an "invisible knapsack of unearned assets" (McIntosh, 2008, p. 123) remains concealed because individuals are either unwilling and/or unable to disclose its true form. The inability to unconceal whiteness is very closely linked to its processual and discursive nature, which has been graced by the forces of history as normal and oftentimes indiscernible. Hylton (2009) argues: "The discursive power that is embodied through the 'discourse of othering' causes whiteness to be 'inside, 'included', 'powerful', the 'we', the 'us', the 'answer' as opposed to the problem, and most important of all, unspoken" (p. 66). As such, white audiences may have extreme difficulty in conceptualizing themselves as racialized beings, in that traditional outlooks have consistently framed 'race' as something exclusively focused on the Other (i.e., not white). Consequently, Hylton (2009) further suggests that envisioning 'race' in this way can deceptively lead white people into believing they are raceless beings, which subsequently prohibits an uncritical evaluation as to what constitutes their societal 'norms' and world view. Under such workings, Heidegger (1977) describes dissembling as "a being [that] appears, but it presents itself as other than it is," (p. 176).

Yet, equally important is Heidegger's theory that concealment can also act as refusal: "Beings refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly least feature which we touch upon most readily when we can say no more of beings than that they are" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 175). It is with this thought in mind that race-neutrality begins to exert its compelling doctrine so as to conceal whiteness. That is, white people have not only been dissembled into recognizing themselves as something they are not (i.e. raceless beings); but also, colour-blindness reinforces a perspective that is rooted in this refusal – that is, a refusal to acknowledge 'race' as it shapes the individual, since this overarching narrative purports that everyone is treated equally and afforded with the same opportunities. As a result, the "least feature" that Heidegger alludes to is deceptively constructed as operating within a universalistic perspective that refuses further deconstruction upon its subject's thinking.

White Privilege

Furthermore, CRT scholars recognize that such refusal can also be attributed to the unmistakable element of privilege that remains synonymous with whiteness. After all, there is a great deal of power to be exercised from maintaining an invisible and 'raceless' identity/gaze that simultaneously constructs the Other as hypervisible and knowable. This has led Bhabba (1994) to remark that such a position bears a striking similarity to colonialist discourse by way of its apparent fixity and promulgation of 'truth' concerning the Other. Dyer (2008) also goes on to note that speaking on behalf of humanity represents the ultimate form of power – a privilege that is made available to white people who are "not raced" but left beyond the capabilities of those who can only ever speak for their race. Not surprisingly, then, many are unwilling to accept the proposition of white

privilege, as the oppressors stand to benefit from its intrinsic benefits at the expense of the oppressed:

Privilege increases the odds of having things your own way, of being able to set the agenda in a social situation and determine the rules and standards and how they're applied. Privilege grants the cultural authority to make judgments about others and to have those judgments stick. It allows people to define reality and to have prevailing definitions of reality fit their experience. Privilege means being able to decide who gets taken seriously, who receives attention, who is accountable to whom and for what. And it grants a presumption of superiority and social permission to act on that presumption without having to worry about being challenged (Johnson, 2008, p. 117).

Moreover, as Dei, Karumanchery and Karumanchery-Luik (2004) discuss, it also requires one to undertake a difficult admission:

Deep down, in places that they don't want to talk about, they feel that privilege, but acknowledging these 'freedoms' would require that they recognize and take responsibility for their participation in the continuance of social injustice and the relational impact that their liberty has on the oppressive existence of others (p. 82).

Few are willing to relinquish such power and/or admit to such wrongdoing, resulting in what Wildman, Armstrong, Davis and Grillo (1996) consider a retreat to invisibility:

"The invisibility of privilege strengthens the power it creates and maintains. The invisible cannot be combated and as a result privilege is allowed to perpetuate, re-generate and re-

create itself” (p. 8). For this reason, it is important for those engaging with CRT to understand the methods employed by white people to veil, distort, and further conceal their whiteness.

Concealing Whiteness

One such example has already been mentioned at length – that is, those assertions of colour-blindness and individualist liberalism. By firmly aligning with the dominant power system, whiteness is able to conveniently present itself as responsible for its own success based upon merit rather than the powerful structures it benefits from (Wildman & Davis, 2008). However, Bonilla-Silva (2003) posits three other ways in which white power becomes dematerialized. One such explanation is through a process of naturalization, whereby racial differences are seen as the result of biological predispositions. While not as popular as they used to be, these types of arguments are often used and justified by a large body of ‘race’ research that has, and continues to be conducted from a perspective rooted in hard science. The term ‘raciology’ is often invoked to describe such “scholarly” work; yet, the writing does more to fuel racist beliefs and obscure ‘race’-related knowledge than it does to comprehensively analyze the complex nature of racialized beings and racism. Bonilla-Silva (2003) also argues that cultural racism is used to further conceal white power, as racism has slowly began to move away from these biological explanations towards an orientation that explains difference in broader, socio-cultural terms. Vaught (2008) further elaborates, by suggesting that white racism disguises itself as “a rational and even necessary response to the practices of a deeply troubled Other culture” by essentializing a “masternarrative of Black violence” (p. 579). Lastly, Bonilla-Silva (2003) brings forth the tactic of

minimization, as a way for white people to dilute the importance that 'race' and racism continue to advance in the twenty first century.

Unconcealing Whiteness

To rupture the inconspicuous presence of whiteness, it is important for researchers to approach the topic with an understanding that white people do not universally and automatically subscribe to this racialized discourse. Leonardo (2002) makes an important distinction in the existing literature by clearly emphasizing the difference between whiteness and white people: "Whiteness is a racial discourse, whereas the category 'white people' represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color" (p. 31). White people can therefore be 'read' based on the signified meaning of their skin colour, but it is not to say they make decisions and judgments based upon a white paradigm. Leonardo states as much, by noting "to the extent that a man can be feminist, whites can be anti-white." (p. 31). Similarly, those who are not white are subject to the invisible power of whiteness as well. Their skin may read as Other, but their world-view can be just as easily formulated to appropriate this paradigm. Accordingly, whiteness is an extremely multifaceted notion that can be perceived as a discourse, world-view and social concept (Leonardo, 2002).

Its social conception, Leonardo further argues, stems from its long-standing historical tendency to assert elements of white culture as privileged and superior to others. Such thinking obviously relates closely to the perceived 'normalcy' of whiteness; but it is imperative to note the violence that has historically accompanied these assertions. Roediger (1994) goes so far as to suggest that delusively innocent and/or innocuous components of whiteness are "nothing but oppressive and false" (p. 13). In other words,

one cannot overlook the historical predilection that material and non-material forms of violence accompany whiteness when it becomes asserted as some type of “imagined racial collective” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 32).

Yet, given the social constructedness of whiteness it is also noteworthy to acknowledge the contingent factors that it comes to rely upon (Hylton, 2009). It is neither fixed nor universal in nature, but rather influenced by a unique history and geography. These forces come to change over time, requiring that whiteness refashion its discursive message to better encapsulate such particularities. Consequently, subjects who were previously seen as belonging to a group labelled Other, may also become part of the updated whiteness: “For it to remain dominant, whiteness has to seduce allies, convince them of the advantages of such an alliance, and sometimes be able to forsake immediate advantages for long-term goals of domination” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 41). Rearticulations of this sort (as they pertain to both the social construction of whiteness and the Other) can transpire and materialize in a number of different ways. One of the most powerful methods, however, is through the versatile and persuasive force of representation.

Constructing ‘Race’ Through Representation

Representative practices are a pervasive force to the world we live in. From a social constructionist viewpoint, this seems hardly surprising given the notion that meaning is produced rather than “found”. By tailoring a focus into the force of representation, one begins to question the role that images, language, signs, and symbols play in constructing meaning; and more importantly, the power dynamics that go into creating these desired (or undesired) understandings. As Hall (1997) suggests, recognizing these dialogic performances rather than conceive of representation as a “one-

way transmitter” can help to differentiate those who occupy the more powerful position in this relationship.

In this vein, whiteness continues to act as a site for privilege by way of its prescriptive and normalizing gaze. Returning to its invisible presence, whiteness constructs Others as being different from the “ordinary” white majority; and as Hall (1997) notes: “Difference signifies. It ‘speaks’” (p. 230). As such, (white) control over the articulation and representation of difference acts as an important way to create particular realities: “They [white people] had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’” (Hall, 2003, p. 236; emphasis in original). Controlling the means through which knowledge is produced, whiteness is afforded with the ability to adapt and change these constitutions as it sees fit, leaving Others subjected to its discursive power. More precisely, the difference that is highlighted in this regard tends to rely upon an understanding for whiteness as the “norm”, creating overly simplistic binary oppositions (Hall, 1997). Quite often, this dichotomized and categorical framework results in the (re)production of stereotypes displayed through images, language, etc., which Hall refers to as a regime of representation (i.e. those responsible for producing power/knowledge relations upon which people come to understand themselves). In other words, these regimes of representation function to establish fixed conceptions of what it means to be Other by reducing people to a limited number of characteristics. Additionally, they provide a way to “know” the Other without having to make any real interaction: “Stereotypes abound when there is distance. They are an invention, a pretense that one knows when the steps that would make real knowing possible cannot be taken or are not allowed” (hooks, 1992, p. 170).

Various forms of representation (i.e. TV, films, photography, language, etc.), act as a salient location to begin interrogating whiteness inasmuch that they exist as a site for white power. bell hooks (1992) notes the historical recognition of this fact: “From slavery on, white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination” (p. 2). However, it should be noted that images come to mean something different depending upon the context under which they appear and are read. Hall (1997) uses the term “inter-textuality” to describe this process, whereby images do not carry their meaning independently; but rather “play off their meanings against one another, across a variety of texts and media” (p. 232). Consequently, racialized identities in sport require an appreciation for the particular environments, temporalities, ideologies, technologies, etc. to fully appreciate the way mediated images come to (re)produce everyday understandings of the body (McDonald, 1996).

Sport and National Identity

In recent years, a growing number of scholars have turned their attention to the way sport and national identity become complexly interrelated, producing “authentic” citizens and “different” or “less-than” non-citizens (Abdel-Shehid, 2005; Adams, 2006; Carrington & McDonald, 2001; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Kennedy, 2009; Marqusee, 2001; Pitter, 2006; Ramos & Gosine, 2008; Spracklen, 2001; Wilson, 2006). Sporting cultures are constituted by complex and multiple discursive fields that either implicitly or explicitly locate one inside or outside the symbolic boundaries of what Anderson (1991) refers to as the “imaginary community”. Upheld by invented traditions (such as sport),

one's ability to become part of the imagined community is contingent upon his/her ability to comprehend the symbols inscribed therein (Cohen, 1985).

However, as various scholars have pointed out, there are inherent problems associated with this search for "cultural cohesion" (Marqusee, 2001, p. 125). As Said (1994) wisely notes: "All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (p. 4). Attempts to homogenize a multicultural, ambiguous, and different populace into one neatly compartmentalized imagined community are therefore flawed. Ramos and Gosine (2008) make this point clear in their analysis of hockey-legend Maurice Richard's death. By analysing the narratives utilized by newspaper columnists to make sense of Richard's life, they discovered that his "meaning" had vastly different connotations dependent upon the audience (i.e. French Canadian or Anglophone). Thus, the notion that hockey collectively manages to unite *all* Canadians around a shared experience is at best, overly-simplistic and at worst prejudiced. It is not shared, but rather comes to mean different things for different people. Dominant groups in society who construct the symbolic boundaries of these imagined communities (benefitting from being located "inside" that terrain) therefore look to reproduce social hierarchies and relations of power so as to maintain their relative position(s) of privilege.

Spracklen (2001), in his examination of rugby football, illuminates the sport as one that is produced as not only masculine and "northern" – but also, implicitly white. He notes that the idealized past upon which the imagined community rests emerges from a period of time before migration patterns changed Britain's racial landscape (i.e. an era of "undisturbed" whiteness). The sport's heroes, he argues, are produced in a way that

reinforces the symbolic power of a white, northern, working-class male. Subsequently, those who are able to decode and deduce value from these cultural signifiers are afforded entrance into the imagined community, while those who cannot are excluded from this symbolic territory. The boundaries are clear, in that the sport's Other is easily recognizable; that is "*not* southern, *not* homosexual, *not* feminine, *not* middle class, and *not* for those who do not understand the language and myths of 'the game'" (Spracklen, 2001, p. 75; emphasis in original).

Similarly, scholars studying hockey culture and the production of a Canadian identity have also recognized Otherness as an important theme for analysis. As is commonly purported: "To be Canadian is to be 'not American.'" And "*hockey is Canadian*" (Holman, 2009, p. 4; emphasis in original). Although the issue becomes more complex upon further analysis (Hyatt & Stevens, 2009), the Other maintains an undeniable presence in both historical and contemporary constructions of the sport. Kennedy (2009) locates the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and the Soviet Union as one such example, articulating the degree to which the Other illuminates and affords Canadianness with meaning. Today, he acknowledges that the role once fulfilled by the Soviets has become inherited by Americans. However, he suggests that the continued remembrance and celebration of the 1972 Summit Series signifies a desire on the part of Canadians to partake in its supposed shared culture. Noting that Canada's social composition has changed drastically since 1972 to reflect Trudeau's vision of a multicultural country, Kennedy (2009) finds the continued idealization of the Summit Series to be problematic:

Assuming that it is fair to say that immigrants would not find much resonance in a hockey series played over thirty years ago, one might read the nostalgia for the series as a sign of two things: (1) that the original moment is gone (and, along with it, any real political power that such a clear definition of the Canadian self might have yielded) and (2) that those who keep the series alive do so in a wistful remembrance not just of a Canada that at that moment had a clear sense of who it was but also of a Canada that is no longer, culturally and ethnically, what it was (p. 60).

The ensuing obfuscation and romanticization of the past amounts to what Gruneau and Whitson (1993) have termed “cultural amnesia” (p. 132). In other words, the marginalized experiences of non-white and female Others have been largely distorted/erased in contemporary memorializations of an imagined community or bygone era of Canadianness. Aboriginal and black populations, for example, are largely written outside this symbolic territory (Pitter, 2006), while hockey’s small-town, rural whiteness and hypermasculinized undertones remain firmly intact (Adams, 2006).

Nations and sporting cultures, Abdel-Shehid (2005) argues, are structurally homologous and share much in common with one another. In particular, both are afraid of social difference – resulting in the constant “attempt to produce conformity and sameness, and disavow difference and inequality” (p. 3). These normatizing powers are undoubtedly linked to whiteness and thereby derive meaning from a dichotomized Other. Consequently, the resulting binary allows for an easy and secured understanding of “us” only through its denotation of “them” (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha (1994) refers to this phenomenon as a nation’s constructed double, or “ghost” whereby populations learn the

boundaries of their constituted citizenship and/or nationality. To exemplify the manifestation of this position within sport, Abdel-Shehid (2005) uses Ben Johnson as the “ghost” that is capable of delineating a true Canadian citizen: “The inability to forget Ben, or the injunction to forgetfully remember him, marks the limits of the nation. Remembering/forgetting Ben marks the nation’s boundaries and separates good from evil, pure from impure, “Canada” from “immigrant.” (p. 92). Not surprisingly, then, Donovan Bailey’s public dismissal of Ben Johnson’s looming spectre represented a symbolic act in the evaluation (and evolution) of Canadian nation/state and sport politics. That is to say, blackness became a key marker of Ben Johnson’s ghost, subsequently placing all black athletes (including Bailey) under the category of “Other”. However, through his public disavowal of this haunting figure, Bailey “[reproduced] a Manicheism between a good blackness and an un-Canadian one” (p. 92) – amounting to what became an additional dichotomy. Even more interesting was Bailey’s continued identification with his homeland, Jamaica. By refusing to forget these diasporic histories, Bailey was constructed as being somehow un-Canadian since “loss of memory, or forgetting, is crucial to the repressive and normalizing processes of making insiders and outsiders” (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p. 5). Moreover, “Jamaica” still carried with it the leftover connotations and/or residue from Ben Johnson’s rise to – and fall from – Canadian fame. After being implicated on drug charges, Johnson’s identity went from one that was “Canadian” to “Jamaican-Canadian” in the media (Jackson, Andrews & Cole, 1998).

While a loss of memory is crucial in normalizing outsiders, a similar reinforcement or *remembering* of privileged (white) histories asserts itself through sport to reproduce a social and political power structure benefitting the invisible majority. The

identity politics associated with this remembering relate closely to Newman and Giardina's (2008) study on NASCAR culture and its subsequent effect on white and non-white subjectivities. They argue that the meaning of the Confederate flag has been (re)mediated within NASCAR's landscape, accruing to a form of cultural revisionism that seeks to assume ownership of the signified message and present it as less politicized and/or racialized (e.g. "heritage, not hate" or "pride, not prejudice"). Newman and Giardina (2008) suggest that we think of this process as a form of colonization for "...both *collective memory* and *the process of remembering* under the dominant position of White subjectivity" (p. 491; emphasis in original). Dangerously, then, this "preferred reading" of the flag serves an important political purpose in that it reformulates people's historical realities and/or perceptions to re-engage with oppressive power structures; yet, presents them in a newly romanticized and non-threatening light. Yearning for this glorified bygone era, the white subject contemporaneously presents himself/herself as a social victim that has become afflicted by an age of difference; in turn, creating a nostalgic imaginary space for one to construct his/her own self. As Newman and Giardina (2008) go on to say:

In this way, defining one's identity through the negation of the other (what Nietzsche called "ressentiment") is a process governed by the strategic alienation of the other in forms of knowledge building, genres of representation, and the deployment of moral, emotional, and affective evaluation and investments (p. 496).

Clearly, then, subjectivities of the white self and non-white other become experienced and known in ways that project a strong underlying visceral component that is produced

and regulated by the invisible white majority. King, Leonard, and Kusz (2007) describe this as being symptomatic of a new veiled white power that has become increasingly difficult to recognize in a neoliberal (sporting) environment.

Newman (2007a; 2007b) has explored this process in greater detail by critically interrogating the American south and its sporting culture. He argues that the mascot for Ole Miss, Colonel Reb, represents a symbol of whiteness that continues to be used for its antiquated logic(s) by a neo-Conservative collective. Additionally, other symbols (e.g. fight songs, anthems, etc.) are employed by sport audiences to connote a similar signified message: "...the conspicuous affect of Dixie South hegemonic whiteness" (Newman, 2007a, p. 319). Taken altogether as part of the sporting culture at Ole Miss, Newman (2007a) theorizes that:

...the discursive formations activated in and through Ole Miss as a symbolic structure serve to substantiate such a claim by constructing an imaginary social institution occupied by ideals of supremacy, alienation, and oppression and made real by a history of segregation, racism, and intolerance. Through this reincarnation of an Old South symbolic system in the context of a postplantation "new New South" (Cobb, 1999), the Jim Crow identity politics and the White supremacist thrusts of the New South are updated, if not activated, within the contemporary moment (p. 320).

This contemporary moment is often made visible through sport, where whiteness can become both performed and the spectacle on display (Newman, 2007b; Newman & Giardina, 2008). As such, sporting spaces become over-representational and over-

determining ideological conduits for the biopolitical governance of white and non-white subjectivities.

‘Race’ and Sport

To study racism and racialized subjects within sport, it is first necessary to pay homage to the work of Dr. Harry Edwards (1969) who in many ways introduced the study of sport sociology to audiences with “The Revolt of the Black Athlete”. Set amidst the Civil Rights era, Edwards assumes a critical position that places the black athlete underneath an entirely new lens. At the time, black athletes were amassing in greater numbers to find much larger representation in the world of sport. While this led many to falsely believe in the notion of racial equality (at least, in sport), Edwards became a dissenting voice by problematizing this narrative. With the common understanding that sport existed as some type of utopian world – partitioned from society’s everyday social and political ills – Edwards believed the alternative: “The simple truth of the matter is that the sports world is not a rose flourishing in the middle of a wasteland. It is part and parcel of that wasteland, reeking of the same racism that corrupts other areas of our society” (Edwards, 1969, p. 34). He began to highlight the ways black athletes were being constructed as a “super animal, but an animal nevertheless” in the minds of their white colleagues; and as a commodity or asset by the disproportionately white group of team owners (p. 17). And, if sport existed as an apparatus to extol the virtues of goodwill and cooperation between races, why did no such qualities transcend beyond the walls of sport? Working from this radically different ontological grounding, Edwards wrote an empowering piece of literature that called upon black athletes for support. Situated during

a period of social activism, many athletes answered the call and began to use sport as a medium for social change.

The political potential for sport became a way to enact change, blossoming into an entire academic field of study. However, as Edwards (2010) now contends, the athletes, coaches, management, fans, etc. that comprise sport are far less concerned with their political significance compared to their interest in business-related matters. This disheartening trend has prompted Edwards (2010) to proclaim the “deterioration in the circumstances of the black athlete” (p. 60) from both a statistical and more symbolic level. Having lived through the Civil Rights era witnessing acts of political protest by black athletes, Edwards begins to contemplate what has brought forth this unfortunate downfall. His primary suggestion is that an important divide has transpired in the black community among class lines; with the lower class being represented as a more authentic portrayal of blackness. As a result, athletes have been seduced into adopting this racialized form of masculinity (and earlier mentioned “gangsta” culture) as a way of presenting “realness”, only to find themselves seriously hurt, killed, or incarcerated (Edwards, 2010). Furthermore, Edwards notes the added potential for those who play professional sport to become so enamoured by the allurements of wealth and material goods (as ‘gangsta culture’ encourages) that one is liable to dismiss their role as a political figure and/or role model.

Scholars have dedicated considerable time to theorizing and researching racialized masculinities in sport as they come to embody or contest ‘gangsta’ or hip hop culture. And somewhat predictably, the ambiguities surrounding the merits and/or value of this type of identity construction continue to persist in the sporting sphere. One such

example is illustrated in the work of Cunningham (2009), who analyzed hip hop culture as a political act of defiance to professional sporting leagues such as the National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Football League (NFL). In his work, Cunningham explores the possibility that these professional federations develop policies from a perspective rooted in whiteness as a means to “control” black athletes (e.g. fines for touchdown celebrations, the NBA dress code, etc.). In turn, traditional racist notions that portray black bodies as naturally deviant become reified, while suggesting that white power (concealed as part of these white norms/policies) is a way to subdue the threatening and pathological Other into becoming “safe”. Falling in line with contemporary forms of cultural racism, hip hop culture is exclusively demarcated as black and constructed by each respective league, the media, fans, etc. as criminal and dangerous. As noted, there are some critics (Edwards, 2010; hooks, 2004) who are grossly aware of the way black masculinity comes to be essentialized underneath this violent hip hop narrative by white supremacist thought. Hoberman (1997) reaffirmed this fear by elucidating the amalgamation of athlete, rapper, and violence into one consolidated construction of black masculinity:

While it is assumed that sport has made an important contribution to racial integration, this has been counterbalanced by the merger of the athlete, the gangster rapper, and the criminal into a single black male persona that the sports industry, the music industry, and the advertising industry have made into the predominant image of black masculinity in the United States and around the world (p. xxvii).

Yet, Cunningham (2009) contests this commodified and demonizing portrayal of the black athlete to politicize their (dis)engagements with hip hop. Instead, he argues that some black athletes internalize elements of hip hop culture (e.g. style, fashion, showmanship, etc.) as a way to claim their own, distinct black identity in the face of the imposing spectre of whiteness. Hip hop culture, in this regard, has little association with the violence and misogynistic values that are so commonly referred to by its critics. Rather, it is used by black athletes to aesthetically contest those policies that are asserted as the norm and/or driven to create a positive league “image”. Of course, the image is meant to appease a largely white, upper-class, corporate fanbase; and so-called norms are often racialized to exist as part of an invisible whiteness (as Cunningham demonstrates by problematizing the notion of sportsmanship). Therefore, by thinking of hip hop culture in these terms - as an embodied form of black masculinity - it can come to represent a re-claiming of subjectivity that stands up to the forces of whiteness: “Therefore, the unique stylizing, posing, clothing, and dialect that signify a hip-hop black masculinity is a way for young people to exercise power...as a way to demonstrate an oppositional identity that is reified as a sign of a strong black man” (Brown, 2005, p. 78). After all, hip hop (as an art form) is no stranger to politics, as it quite naturally strives to “revive and reinvent what has been forgotten” (Dyson, 1996, p. 123).

Yet, too often hip hop’s political nature is one that is constructed by whiteness – in the media, by managerial forces, policy, etc. – to pathologize the black male athlete (Brown, 2005; de B’béri & Hogarth, 2009; Hughes, 2004; Leonard, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; McDonald & Togli, 2010). In particular, the NBA has used this strategy to help justify many of its policies and managerial tactics which aim to control deviant black bodies. In

a post-Michael Jordan era, where athletes such as Allen Iverson publicly acknowledge and display their relationship to hip hop culture,⁴ scholars have been quick to note the NBA's commodification and simultaneous demonization of such cultural practices (Boyd, 1997, 2003; Cunningham, 2009; Hughes, 2004). As Cunningham (2009) suggests, the NBA has struggled with this attempt to appropriate "hip-hop or street culture, for it cannot be controlled, and apparently, it can be contained only temporarily" (p. 54). In other words, hip hop has been made to represent the potentially dangerous juvenocratic characteristics that are discussed in the aforementioned work of Dyson (1996). And while this works to discourage the NBA from ever truly commodifying hip hop culture, it subsequently infers that black, hip hop identifying athletes enter into a power dynamic with the promulgated whiteness of the NBA – which seeks to impose and limit the subjectivities of its black athletes into something "normative".

This "natural aversion to mainstream appropriation" has subsequently allowed the NBA to construct hip hop as an uncooperative and unruly cultural practice belonging to the Other (i.e. black athletes) (Cunningham, 2009, p. 54). When events such as the Pistons-Pacers brawl (de B'éri & Hogarth, 2009), domestic abuse (Brown, 2005) and gun ownership (Leonard, 2010) occurred, the NBA positioned itself to bring forth rationality (exclusively claimed under whiteness) to an otherwise irrational black athlete who falls "victim" to the "uncontrollable" hip hop narrative...accruing to a form of cultural racism. Such is the nature of the NBA age policy Leonard (2006a) argues, insomuch that there exists a link between younger players, hip hop, and a "lack of discipline within the league" resulting in "the accusations against hip-hop and against the

⁴ Michael Jordan was constructed as existing beyond the "typical" boundaries for Black athletes; whereas Iverson (and the hip hop culture he embodies) are meant to reinforce White fears of the stereotyped, dangerous Other (Andrews, 2001).

younger ‘baller’ as the seeds that gave rise to the brawl” (p. 159). In turn, the NBA puts forth the philosophy that it remains dedicated to “ushering a generation of Black youth toward school (despite underfunding of public schools, the dismantling of affirmative action) who might otherwise terrorize residents through criminal activity and other financial demands on the state” (Leonard, 2006a, p. 169). Assuming this paternalistic role, the NBA requires that young, black athletes attend college to undergo a transformation under the tutelage of a predominantly white coaching base. These legitimized figures (coaches) and institutions (universities) are subsequently endowed with normative powers (i.e. whiteness) that can help to “mature” and “save” the black athlete from the dangerous culture they belong to. The NBA dress code operates in a similar vein, as the mandatory attire is framed as the “professional norm” through which all must acquiesce. This professionalism, however, is a corporatized form of whiteness meant to control the “dangerous” stylistic and aesthetic qualities of hip hop culture (as they represent a demonized form of black masculinity) (McDonald & Tolia, 2010). Hughes (2004) suggests that masking whiteness behind these corporatized objectives has become common practice in the NBA. More importantly, the league fashions a morality play to construct itself favourably: “[The NBA] is itself a set of conventions that, in sometimes subtle and yet always present ways, calls attention to itself as a hero in relation to an “other” that comes from outside” (Hughes, 2004, p. 172). What this amounts to, then, is a dramatized (and racist) storyline that becomes consumed as part of popular culture, as Hughes (2004) outlines:

At a broad level, then, I think the NBA stands as a disturbing and prominent example of management becoming consumable as popular

culture, popularizing, that is, a management perspective in relation to troublesome, unproductive subjects. In this presentation of managing Black men as dramatic popular culture, the NBA contributes to a subtle continuation of a presumed (and reassuring) link between Whiteness and management while conveniently, even strategically, avoiding altogether specific questions about race (p. 181).

But the NBA is not only to blame, as scholars have focused considerable attention to the way black athletes are produced by the media. Hylton (2009) argues that “the media are key actors in constructing our ideas about what it means to be a racialised, gendered and classed body in society, and this dialogue is worked, reworked and transformed in the public domain of sport” (p. 83). As such, the tendency has been for “authentic” representations of black masculinity to be those which portray the lower-class signifiers of hip hop culture. The media, therefore, has adopted the criminalization of hip hop culture into its own discourse to castigate and explain the actions of black athletes who commit (or allegedly commit) crimes. In turn, this has resulted in what Leonard (2006b) refers to as “nostalgia for an imagined period when athletes did not commit crimes (before integration)” (p. 528); providing one more example for the invisibility and power of whiteness. Thus, the racist white imaginary is fuelled in its romanticization of an innocent white past that is juxtaposed with, and legitimated by pre-existing fears of black masculinity. McLaughlin (2008), who restricts his focus to basketball, suggests that there is even a sort of “journalistic glee” (p. 145) that takes place when black athletes are seen to confirm the stereotypes of a dangerous hip hop culture. In many ways, these events provide white audiences with the opportunity to make sense of, and appease their

aforementioned fears through a manipulation of the black player. He argues that the white fan can assume a position of moral superiority through these instances, while he/she simultaneously basks in a privileged invisibility which allows them to “claim the power to decide what blackness shall mean as a popular symbol” (p. 146).

All too often, blackness is represented to connote a physicalized essence that stands in stark contrast to its white counterpart. Stemming from colonialist fascinations with the biological niceties of the black body, the media continue to represent these athletes in a manner that emphasizes their physical attributes; thereby constructing the black athlete as something akin to an animal. Hylton (2009) acknowledges the way this is performed through imaging: “black males are photographed naked or semi-naked, posed in animal-like positions, photographed in close-focus shots that highlight sweat and veins, and denied the opportunity to look into the camera” (p. 87). Additionally, these images of a more primitive black being are conjured up in the minds of readers and listeners through popularized discourse outlining the black and white athlete: “...the ‘black’ player is routinely depicted as a natural, a physical marvel, while the ‘white’ player is a thinker, a hard worker, a coach on the floor” (McLaughlin, 2008, p. 137). As Hoberman (1997) notes, there is some historical grounding that has largely paved the way for the evolution of this thinking, tracing its origins to colonialist times. Those (white people) who were interested in the apparent biological differences separating black bodies from “civilized men” (i.e. white bodies) were largely concerned with creating what amounted to a primitive being. In postcolonial times, this line of reasoning has continued to exert its influence in sport by accentuating the “perceived physical advantages of black males that makes them such heroized figures [yet also] maintains the

pathology of black bodies in the forms of paranoia and suspicion” (Guzzio, 2005, p. 229).

This pathologizing of the black male, as McDonald (1999) posits, becomes acutely evident if one is to critically assess the media’s construction of racialized masculinities involved with domestic violence. These individuals do more than play to the white imaginary. They highlight depoliticized representations of the black male sports figure (e.g. Michael Jordan) as the apparent “safe” and/or “good” black man (McDonald, 1996); but also interact with the sphere of whiteness to allow for a site of veiled white power or psychic wealth:

Therefore, as much as the state of nature connotes a presumably equal terrain or level playing field, it also has a doubled resonance: it narrates the intellectual sphere as ‘white’ and the physical sphere as ‘black.’ In sport, this dichotomy is mapped onto black and white bodies such that black bodies are seen as athletically superior *and* therefore less rational (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p. 48).

This dichotomy results in what de B’béri and Hogarth refer to as a “new neocolonial representation of the black body” (p. 96), which they describe as being a transfixed gaze that expects black athletes to uphold and abide by a higher moral standard than the rest of society. The justification for such a position relies heavily upon the false notion that black bodies represent a rather unsubstantiated moral status; and therefore require this expectation within sport’s (white) public sphere. In turn, white fears regarding black masculinity are called upon, and seemingly appeased. Furthermore, as Lane (2007) points out, black athletes are not the only black bodies subjected to a physicalized essence in sport. That is to say, black coaches (at least in the NBA) are very much exposed to the

same thought process: "...only blacks who have first excelled as professional players generally have a shot at head coach. This is not the case for white coaches, for whom professional playing experience is not a prerequisite" (p. 104).

Focusing on the sport of basketball, McLaughlin (2008) invalidates many of these overly simplistic binaries that are meant to explain the racial differences between white and black athletes. This requires that one reconceptualise the sport in order to capture its true aesthetic beauty, many intricacies, and altogether complexity: "[Basketball players] do more than choose whether or not to submit to norms – they generate the norms themselves, in part as a function of the needs of the practice but also as a function of their own desires and their complex relationships with other members of the community" (p. 5-6). In other words, a multitudinal approach that emphasizes micropolitical negotiations is one way to begin moving beyond the popular dichotomies and norms discussed thus far. McLaughlin (2008) suggests that pickup basketball is most conducive to fostering this type of engagement by encouraging its participants to resist the mainstream culture of sports – creating an environment that is "looser, less restrictive, and more open to the creative and even subversive play of participants" (p. 7). While all forms of basketball are improvisational in some regard, pickup basketball is exceptionally so in the absence of coaches. But more importantly, McLaughlin (2008) argues, is pickup basketball's focus on the athlete. In the absence of fans, media, management and other institutionalized structures which clearly help to foster and reproduce stereotypes; pickup basketball represents a "pure" form of the game. In lieu of this purity, a space is created for people to challenge and/or rethink popularized dichotomies:

Basketball simultaneously *establishes* racial dichotomies and provides opportunities to unthink them. It does not guarantee that race will disappear; in fact, for many fans it reinforces conventional definitions...While watching television, which does so much to turn the “white” player and the “black” player into icons, fans have to *work* to decode the powerful visual images and the racialized discourse of game analysts that operate as confirmation of these racial assumptions. For pickup players, the decoding is easier: You cannot pass the ball to a “black player” or a “white player,” you can only pass to that particular player – black or white – over there (p. 160; emphasis in original).

McLaughlin (2008) places a great deal of emphasis on these scenarios which require the athlete to make an improvised decision. This is largely attributable to their temporal nature, allowing players to engage in an “impromptu dance” (p. 48) that illuminates each person’s cultural interaction with the game (i.e. why did the player decide to perform that movement at that time?). Rather than perceive these kinesthetic movements as intuitive responses, an appreciation for the game as a cultural practice is necessary. By adopting this perspective, one can begin to move away from a naturalized lens that frames white and black players as reacting instinctively; and instead, move towards an appreciation for how these movements represent an embodied logic. Most importantly, McLaughlin (2008) posits that these logics become learned by the culture of the game (which is inextricably tied to larger cultural formations) and unconsciously internalized by the athlete. As such, pickup basketball serves as a medium through which we can begin to

explore a multitude of experiences – thereby exposing racialized dichotomies for their overly generalized and simplistic message.

Another one of basketball's oft-mentioned, yet misguided binaries is the "Sport vs. Gangs" discourse. Pertinent to young black males, these children are provided with predetermined subjectivities to construct their masculinity (either through their involvement with sport or gangs). Moreover, sport is positioned to act as a sort of "hoop dream" for black children to pursue if they hope to one day "escape the ghetto." Wanting to problematize this discursive framework, Atencio and Wright (2008) conducted an ethnographic study focused on four young, black males who lived in a low-income, culturally diverse neighbourhood. They found that participants generally made reference to the "Sport vs. Gangs" discourse in their respective understandings for basketball participation; however, the underlying message of this narrative was far too simplistic. Rather than conceive of these young, black males as "...simply "cultural dupes" who will do anything to become star athletes in the context of a monolithic "hoop dream"" (p. 277), Atencio and Wright (2008) discovered that basketball acted as an apparatus through which these people could construct alternative masculinities. In particular, those who were not seen as "elite-level" players recognized themselves as such, and modeled their basketball experience as the means to achieve a host of other pursuits: "...academic achievement, religious pursuits, avoiding gangs, making "positive" friends, and becoming contributing members to their peer groups, families, schools, and communities" (p. 277). Thus, the "Sport vs. Gangs" narrative is far too simplistic in its message. The dualistic implication that successful and unsuccessful identities stem from these hegemonic masculinities distorts our understanding for what actually occurs in the

worlds of these actors. Additionally, an appreciation for how that world becomes shaped by surrounding spaces is necessary to fully capture the fluidity of identity construction and multitude of experiences.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Critical Research and Epistemological Framework

Having reached a postmodern era characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty, researchers have been left with important ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions to consider in their work. Placing all universal truth claims underneath a cloud of suspicion, this paradigm shift has accounted for the paradoxical feelings of angst and optimism contemporaneously felt within academic circles. For those groups of scholars who remain committed to the Enlightenment's espoused notions of an objective reality, such philosophical inquiry represents a threat to the very foundations of scientific research. Empirical findings that have been "impartially extracted", "tested" and "validated" by a "rigorous" scientific method are more frequently being scrutinized by a postmodern critique seeking to illuminate the assumptive beliefs from which these positivistic (and postpositivistic) academicians formulate their analyses. I do not wish to make the claim that all such research utilizes a quantitative approach to understanding, as it would be both unfair and inaccurate to construct these fluid labels in such fixed terms by ignoring their increasingly porous and commensurable shape. However, an intellectual departure from what was once considered the only legitimate means to conduct scientific research has allowed for the perforation of alternative epistemologies and methodologies – making science "a much contested cultural space, a site of the surfacing of what it has historically repressed" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 74). In turn, qualitative methodologies and mixed-method research designs have come to interact with interpretivist, critical, and constructivist world views; providing social scientists with a deeper understanding for a non-linear world set free by oversimplified forms of linear analysis. These theoretical and methodological decisions are influenced by a multitude of interconnected variables that

relate to both the researcher and the researched. Locating myself within the critical paradigm, I shall begin to provide justification for this ideological stance offering insight into the way it comes to shape and construct situated knowledges.

At its core, critical theory rests upon the assumption that the world is unequally structured to privilege certain groups of people and subjugate others. Those who engage with this world view aim to critique hegemonic ideologies and expose the power imbalances between individuals and groups of individuals (Willis, 2007). Rather than conceive of people in the traditional modernist sense (i.e. the “real” meaning of one’s existence lies within, and can subsequently be known through interviews, autobiographies, etc.); critical theorists conceptualize a “politically infused postmodern subject” (McDonald & Birrell, 1999, p. 293). In other words, emphasis is placed on the overarching narratives conferred upon by individuals to produce their respective meaning(s) and understanding(s) of self. By assuming a perspective that positions people as cultural subjects, critical theorists appropriate a different set of ontological assumptions than do postpositivists – despite a mutual belief in material reality.

Complicated by a poststructuralist focus on the deconstruction and destabilization of authorial voice, researchers seeking to locate meaning within a larger dialogic context must be able to relate immaterial narratives to the material world. With this principle acting as a central tenet to the critical paradigm, scholars are left with little choice than to acknowledge the oppressive material consequences and situated realities of their participants; that is, if they hope to change them. In their call to read sport as a “cultural text”, McDonald and Birrell (1999) remind readers of this crucial point:

And while frequently misunderstood as merely embodying a discursive ontology – that is, with the simplistic assertion that nothing exists except narratives – within the framework we endorse, texts cannot be artificially separated from their material roots ... we do not mean to suggest that there is nothing but representation (Hall, 1991): Indeed there are material consequences related to the ideological work that representations and narratives do. (p. 291)

In other words, the examination of narratives becomes both an epistemological and methodological mode of inquiry allowing subjugated material realities to emerge as an ontological foundation for change.

But quite obviously, an associational epistemology does not therefore require one to wholly undertake a realist perspective either. In fact, through a postpositivist adherence to scientific realism, critical theorists argue that a “regime of truth” develops whereby “undisputable facts” are produced to benefit and privilege certain groups in society at the expense of others. As such, even though postpositivism and critical theory share a common belief for an external reality, further distinctions are made by each paradigm: “While positivists see reality in ontological terms, we argue that reality is better conceived as an epistemological issue” (McDonald & Birrell, 1999, p. 293). That is to say, the espoused and “self-evident” truths asserted by scientific realists require a fresh critique beyond whether such claims are empirically (in)valid in the objective world. Instead, social scientists must politicize the act of truth-telling itself; paying close attention to the power/knowledge relations at play: “It is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing – spaces of constructed visibility and

incitements to see which constitute power/knowledge” (Lather, 1993, p. 675). Under this world view, people’s realities are not seen to exist separately from what/how they are *told to think* of themselves. Rather, real-life experience becomes a representative embodiment of these affirmations. Consequently, researchers must problematize universal narratives and the groups who promulgate such claims to reveal hidden truths/realities that are ignored, overlooked, and subjugated by the voices that constitute, regulate, and benefit from such knowledge.

Investigative Research, Ethics, and the Study of Racism

For the purposes of this project, I have chosen to use fieldwork strategies as a method to explore Indiana’s racialized cultural landscape. However, before I begin to outline the specific details related to this approach, I shall first begin by deliberating on some important interrelated issues concerning method; that is, investigative research, ethical responsibilities, and the study of racism.

As has been argued, critical researchers must avoid postmodern nihilism whereby academics “theorize *over* their [participant’s] voices, giving us little reason for collecting their stories” (Fine & Weis, 1996, p. 263; emphasis in original). Alternatively – and in the spirit of critical sociology – a moral commitment to collecting information and discovering (and later helping) oppressed realities is necessary if “social research is to serve the public good” (Fine & Weis, 1996, p. 271). Nonetheless, such a philosophy maintains considerable obstacles. In particular, critical researchers concerned with the study of highly political and oftentimes sensitive topics (e.g. race, sexuality, gender, etc.) are presented with the unfortunate likelihood that people will disguise their true selves as

something else to avoid being “known” and characterized by their intolerance. This is described in more detail by Long and McNamee (2004):

The near universal acceptance that racism is wrong somewhat ironically brings its own problems. There is an unwillingness to acknowledge certain practices, within and outside sport, as racist because that might require us to recognize, at least potentially, the racism within ourselves. (p. 405)

In this vein, Sugden and Tomlinson (1999) argue in favour of Jack Douglas’s investigative mode of sociological inquiry which assumes “that profound conflicts of interest, values, feelings and actions pervade social life [meaning that] people to some extent, have good reason to hide from others what they are doing and even...lie to them” (Douglas, 1967, p. 55). As such, covert forms of research become an acceptable and desirable means from which investigative scholars can begin their pursuit to elucidate hidden truths (Patton, 2002). Serving as both “the method, and the stream of consciousness personalized reportage”, Sugden and Tomlinson (1999) recommend Hunter S. Thompson’s gonzo journalism as a useful framework in this regard. Reporters (or, in this case academics) are made to navigate through negotiated waters of disclosure by simultaneously becoming part of the studied culture, whilst remaining semi-detached from the totality of experience. In turn, the careful manoeuvring through contested space illuminates the importance bestowed upon researcher reflexivity, as “the researcher watches his [sic] own impact on the scenes that he is studying, using the reactions to his performance as a means of getting under the skin of social life” (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1999, p. 390). Furthermore, as is clearly illustrated through the work of Hunter S. Thompson, “going gonzo” requires a certain degree of risk-taking on the part of social

commentators/critics. After all, those people with something to hide are likely to restrict information and access points to potential sceptics; making it the responsibility of researchers to creatively find ways to illuminate what has purposefully been concealed (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1999).

But as ethical review boards become increasingly aligned with the protective interests of the institution by dismissing covert research as “ethically irresponsible” and/or unscientific, academic freedom and the potential to enact social change are severely hampered as intellectual concepts (Calvey, 2008; Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; Lugosi, 2006). By studying issues such as racism, homophobia, sexism, etc., researchers are often required to adopt postmodern, critical epistemologies and covert methods to gain access to, and illuminate those groups with concealed power. Yet, such decisions are commonly perceived as unethical in comparison to a traditional, overt, and objective science (unfit to address such complex social issues). And while the *raison d'être* for institutional review boards (IRBs) is both noble and necessary given the unnerving histories of research, it is time for many of these collective bodies to rethink “covert methods” as being an unethical risk to participants and/or a likely liability to the university institution. More often than not, as Lincoln and Tierney (2004) posit, studies of this nature do not indicate “life-threatening possibilities...they are, however, creating the possibility of direct and indirect benefits to participants” (p. 232). In fact, other commentators (Calvey, 2008; Lugosi, 2006) acknowledge the likelihood that all research (including those studies labelled as “overt”) cannot escape covert techniques. Asserting the claim that: “The social context impedes the ethnographer’s ability to maintain open, interactive relationships with all the potential informants throughout the research, and

certain aspects of the ethnographer's identity and motivations inevitably remain concealed" (Lugosi, 2006, p. 546), this belief accentuates research as a highly situated, contested, negotiated, political, and messy process that seems to contradict the linearity and rationalized planning expected by many IRB's. Therefore, Calvey (2008) suggests that ethics be viewed as "contingent, dynamic, temporal, occasioned and situated affairs" (p. 912) to better account for the role played by context in the forging of a researcher/researched relationship.

Studying racism, I recognize that contextual factors will likely influence how and what I choose to reveal to participants. For example, if we are to understand more about this complex social issue, it would make little sense for me to reveal my political intentions to white participants of the study – or engage in spirited debate over what I perceive to be offensive remarks, gestures, etc. Doing so, as alluded to earlier, would only serve to further conceal these people's true beliefs from ever being "known" in the first place. On the other hand, overtly revealing such information to non-white populations may demonstrate support for a voice that remains voiceless...on an issue that we are led to believe does not exist. While the latter scenario raises no ethical concerns to institutional review boards, the same cannot be said for the "covert" or "deceptive" techniques utilized in the former situation. But as many scholars have heretofore argued, such practices are not unethical and should rather be seen as a necessary means to uncover real and authentic data in its natural environment. Recognizing my own positionality as a white, male researcher, these predefined categories will naturally serve as a basis from which white, male participants infer favourable judgments upon my identity. Thus, a belief in what they see as being a shared whiteness (i.e. shared racism)

can potentially act as a conduit through which people trustfully open up and express their true selves. It is the researcher's responsibility to listen attentively, as outlined in Vaught's (2008) research: "I did not interrupt to be sure she knew I disagreed, to explain that I did not share her identity, or to say that I found some of her comments racist. I did not disrupt her sense of racial safety. I participated willingly, though uncomfortably, in a White lie" (p. 567). Referring to this process as "leveraging" her race, Vaught (2008) and many other academics (Calvey, 2008; Duncombe & Jessop, 2002; MacIntyre, 1999; Patton, 2002) consider these covert practices to be an invaluable (yet submerged) part of critical research. That is not to say researchers should go out of their way to present themselves as something they are not so as to delude participants; but rather base these decisions upon the contextual factors at play. Having fallen victim to the characterizations put forth by ethical review boards (e.g. deceptive, dishonest, unprofessional, unscientific, etc.) there are most certainly instances where such tactics are both necessary and ethical. Returning to the notion of "white lies", Guinier and Torres (2002) argue in favour of what they term "political race" to appease any question(s) surrounding research ethics. They write that political race "does not ask what you call yourself but with whom you link your fate" (p. 10). Vaught (2008) further elaborates by noting: "This is an extraordinary ethical principle for research, because it requires researchers with access to Whites to constantly ask whose fate their methods and analyses will affect and how. It asks them to identify with a collective, with a culture" (pp. 577-578). Aligning with those groups and cultures poised beyond a sphere of white supremacy, my ethical intentions are sincerely linked to visions of tolerance and equity;

subsequently requiring me to listen for the called-upon narratives employed by individuals.

It is important to note that neither the individual nor the narrative can be separated from one another, as “race is a place in which poststructuralism and lived realities need to talk” (Fine & Weis, 1996, p. 256). In other words, to merely focus on poststructuralist narratives as being hegemonic forces that exert their power upon objects (i.e. people) is to suggest the world is made up of cultural dupes with little to no sense of autonomy or agency. Contrastingly, an over-emphasis on individual subjectivity sincerely negates the systematic and structuring nature of discourse by making “the individual, minus culture...a free-floating, unattached symbol of the universality of Western individualism” (Vaught, 2008, pp. 575-576). As such, working between these polarized extremes offers two important points for the purpose of this study. Firstly, the process of listening during interviews must be politicized to fall under a much larger umbrella of research ethics. In other words, I should be listening *for* narratives that are used to construct the individual’s sensemaking, and not always *to* the individual himself/herself (Clandenin & Connelly, 2000; Vaught, 2008). In doing so, my ethical responsibility to honour participants is appeased as I focus my attention on the culture from which they choose to identify with. Secondly, under this framework counter-narratives are utilized as a way to highlight minority experiences, voices, and autonomy in the face of a dominant, oppressive, and normalizing whiteness (Vaught, 2008). By paying close attention to these silenced narratives, a greater understanding can emerge for the oppressed realities created by hegemonic cultures; offering a potential site to resist and challenge their institutionalized structure.

Fieldwork

I have chosen to use fieldwork methods as a way to intimately engage with Indiana's "hoosier culture" and learn more about the experiences of those individuals subject to the hoosier narrative. This framework allows for a multitude of complimentary approaches to gather data, including (but not limited to) "document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection" (Denzin, 1978, p. 183). For this reason, fieldwork provides a holistic approach to knowing that unquestionably favours this project's research agenda. On one hand, interviews provide the basis for an emic perspective, affording research participants with the opportunity to construct meaningful narratives of their own subjectivities and realities.⁵ On the other hand, alternative methods such as document analysis, participation, observation, and reflexivity allow for an etic lens whereby researchers critically analyse what takes place in front of them (socially, materially, politically, etc) using theoretical knowledge. In this vein, generated knowledge produced within the context of an interview can be compared to the actions and interpretations of participant behaviour, structuring environments, etc. through observational techniques. Disparities and similarities in these accounts subsequently serve as an important point for analysis and provide the study with a balanced, plurivocal, and comprehensive nature suitable for the examination of a complex phenomenon such as racism.

Unstructured interviewing. However, interviewing must be problematized for its dialogic nature, whereby relations of power come to manifest in the (co)production of knowledge. To borrow a metaphor from Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the interviewer is

⁵ Of course, the interview can serve as an etic location as well – particularly during the analysis stage of research.

far more than a “miner” who extracts buried data from his/her participants using impartial, rigorous questioning. Alternatively, he/she is a “traveller” with pre-existing beliefs, values, and languages that come to co-construct the revelations and meanings generated in that dialogic moment with native inhabitants. This postmodern shift thus implies a renewed focus away from the individual mind to the co-creation of knowledge, which according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) is “produced, relational, conversational, contextual, linguistic, narrative, and pragmatic” (p. 53). Expounding upon this idea, Best (2003) elucidates the way fieldwork and interviewing serves as an “interactional context through which the researcher’s racial identity and the racial identities of those under study are actively managed, negotiated, and solidified” (p. 897). Taking into account the spatial, temporal, and relational specificities which go into (re)creating these identities, a pre-devised set of interview questions would seemingly pose restrictions on this negotiative process. As such, unstructured interviewing techniques will be utilized to allow for an intersubjective emergence of these understandings. As Best (2003) describes, the research encounter (as it becomes situated in this vein) opens the door for people to talk through their symbolic worlds in a way that might reveal assumptions of whiteness. Therefore, I shall pay close attention to the way my own whiteness is constructed by white and non-white participants by creating an open dialogue; one that is constantly weaved through a nexus that conceives of knowledge as produced, relational, conversational, contextual, linguistic, narrative, and pragmatic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In particular, an emphasis on listening to the linguistic structures and meanings utilized by participants can help to unconceal these taken-for-granted beliefs (especially

in those instances where discussion pertains to seemingly “raceless” topics). For example, answering the question “what does it mean to be a hoosier?”, participants often responded in coded language that assumed a position of whiteness, projecting those beyond its realm in unfavourable terms. In these instances, it became my responsibility to ask probing questions so as to unearth the deeper meanings behind their words, values, and assumptions. Recognizing that “experience happens narratively” (Clandenin & Connelly, 2000, p. 19), I sometimes relied upon stories from one’s past to help promote introspection on the part of the participant. Although these sorts of dialogues were read and interpreted through my critical race perspective, conversations had very little to do with “race” on the surface. That is not to say I avoided asking questions related to race altogether. However, being able to compare the similarities and/or contradictions between both lines of questioning helped in better understanding a complex set of cultural politics.

Participant observation. Moreover, the interviews themselves serve an important role in comparing what was said to what is observed in the field. How do the attitudes differ from the behaviours? Outfitted with a journal to log my field notes, I examined everything in front of me underneath a critical microscope. This is, according to Patton (2002) a valuable advantage to observational methods: “Because all social systems involve routines, participants in those routines may take them so much for granted that they cease to be aware of important nuances that are apparent only to an observer who has not become fully immersed in those routines” (pp. 262-263). By analysing gestures, advertisements, architecture, museums, names, parks, schools, gymnasiums, restaurants, etc.; my observations stemmed from a wide array of ‘hoosier’ spaces. With the understanding that “everything that goes on in or around the [location of

study] is data” (Patton, 2002, p. 286), I paid close attention to both what *was* and *was not* taking place in front of me. It became clear that certain groups stood to benefit more than others from existing material structures and their embedded symbolic/ideological values – creating the need to problematize the deeper meanings embedded with(in) these spaces.

Document analysis. These questions become even more informed when placed in conjunction with knowledge generated from the interviewing process *and* document analysis. In a world that is overwhelmed by signs (Baudrillard, 1994), there is a significant need on the part of researchers to interrogate the meanings and realities behind these symbols. The word ‘hoosier’, for example, certainly means something to Indiana citizens of today. But its history is complex and must be taken into account if we are to formulate a complete understanding of the label. Similarly, Indiana basketball contemporaneously acts as a form of cultural capital for the citizens of Indiana; but to truly understand its significance, it is imperative to move beyond interviews and observational techniques to situate this affinity within its proper historical, political, and social context. Thus, documents from Indiana’s past were explored, placing particular emphasis on the historiographical techniques used to understand important political and cultural events. Foucault has referred to this process of studying discursive developments (and the intrinsic power/knowledge relations) as genealogy, which is described by Markula and Pringle (2006): “In short, genealogy is an examination of the relations between history, discourse, bodies and power in an attempt to help to understand social practices or objects of knowledge that ‘continue to exist and have value for us’” (p. 32). Having established the word ‘hoosier’ and the sport of basketball as sites with

contemporary meaning for Indianans, my goal was to interact with as many texts as possible that relied upon these symbols for meaning.

I restricted the document analysis to primarily focus on three bodies of literature. Firstly, to interrogate the word ‘hoosier’, I relied upon both primary and secondary source documents. Primary sources of interest were those which utilized the word (e.g. poems, literature, songs, etc. from the late 18th century to 20th century); while secondary sources emerged from the body of historical scholarship that concerns itself with discovering or outlining the “origins” of the term. Secondly, to delve into the negotiation of a racialized white ‘hoosier’ body, I utilized newspaper clippings from the local Martinsville paper before, during, and following January, 1998. At this time, the Martinsville High School boys’ basketball team (and fans) were accused by their opponents for creating a racially hostile environment. Therefore, to make sense of the discourses that emerged at that time, I relied upon the local newspaper – the Martinsville Reporter – to appreciate the way people in the community understood their whiteness. Moreover, this important information served as a backdrop from which I was able to compare interviewee’s contemporary remembering and sensemaking of the event. Lastly, I spent considerable time analyzing what exists as a large body of popular literature concerning Indiana basketball. Countless individuals (most of whom are white men) have decided to write books about Indiana high school basketball, creating a space to understand the ways histories are remembered and packaged for consumption.

To analyze each document, I relied upon a predetermined codelist informed by my theoretical orientation (i.e. critical race theory) and methodological stance rooted in discourse analysis. However, I also allowed for inductive reasoning, as themes (excluded

from the codelist) oftentimes emerged naturally from the data itself. Recognizing the purposeful sampling techniques employed in this instance, I should also make clear my rationale for choosing the Martinsville Reporter as a means to investigate whiteness, ‘hoosier’ discourses, and basketball. Perhaps most obviously, each of these phenomena converged at this node to produce what amounted to, and followed, the high school basketball game in question. More importantly, however, is the fact that the Martinsville Reporter represents a local or community voice in a town that remains steadfastly committed to everything local.⁶ After the incident in question took place in late January of 1998, the newspaper’s columnists wrote endlessly for months afterwards; creating a public stir that is best captured in the paper’s opinion pages (the opinion section was overwhelmed by concerned Martinsville citizens wanting to share their thoughts on racism, race, sport, and the community). Since many of the people writing into the local paper were alluding to the kind of place Martinsville was before the infamous basketball game, I also went out of my way to examine the newspaper columns/editorials in the month leading up to that incident. In sum, this resulted in approximately five months’ worth of data ranging from December, 1997 to April, 1998.

Researcher reflexivity, validity and trustworthiness. Of course, the knowledge generated from the aforementioned fieldwork strategies did not occur in a vacuum. Not only did my presence impact the way people spoke, opened up to, and performed in front of me; but my own interpretation of the “data” cannot be overlooked in the production of knowledge. As well, I would be remiss to ignore the linguistic, spatial and temporal ebbs/flows that moulded each piece of information into a contextualized space of fixed

⁶ As this event makes clear, “big-city” newspapers such as the Indianapolis Star are positioned as “out-of-touch” with what goes on in small towns like Martinsville, and are representative of a liberal agenda that seeks to dismantle traditional ‘hoosier’ life – found in places like Martinsville.

meaning. I came to the research context wearing multiple hats, and it was my responsibility to introspectively examine what these hats mean, and how they came to forge my perceptions and conclusions at this moment in time. Drawing from Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) notion of reflexive objectivity, I utilized a journal to contemplatively look within my own being and record what I perceived as my own sets of prejudices, values, and beliefs. More specifically, these writings were tailored to "making known" my oftentimes "unknown" hermeneutic standpoint – with the overarching goal to strive "...for objectivity about subjectivity" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 242).

As Lather (1993) argues, this willingness to create a "site that 'gives to be seen' the unthought in our thought" (p. 676) represents a kind of validity after poststructuralism that requires researchers to be open and honest in their reportage of methodological practices. In doing so, they become outfitted to address (as best they can) spheres of knowledge that have heretofore remained behind the locked doors of a positivistic regime of truth. In other words, Lather's (1991) position is one that critiques the scientific method on the basis of its apparent objectivity. To pretend as if the scientist acts value-free (linguistically, ideologically, historically, etc.) in the research context is to assume a type of political "unconsciousness" (Lather, 1991, p. 106). Research, she posits, is always multi-voiced and co-constructed; and to think otherwise is both limited and *limiting* for those who fall outside "normative framings of validity" (Lather, 1993, p. 674). Validity (and here, I mostly have in mind the positivist notion of external validity – which concerns itself with the generalizability of results/conclusions) must therefore be problematized for its role in the constitution of knowledge/power. Otherwise, a vicious "circle where theory is reinforced by experience conditioned by theory" (Lather, 1991, p.

54) unfolds to marginalize those on the periphery of an established and “validated” norm. As each of us remain subject to multiple, competing and oftentimes contradictory discourses at any given time, we should begin to reconceptualise our notion of what is “real” to better encompass “discourses of the real” (Lather, 1993, p. 675). Calling upon Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphor of the rhizome, Lather (1993) suggests a rigorous, rhizomatic approach to validity that will be embraced throughout this project:

To function rhizomatically is to act via relay, circuit, multiple openings, as “‘crabgrass’ in the lawn of academic preconceptions” (Ulmer, 1989, p. 185). There is no trunk, no emergence from a single root, but rather “arbitrary branching off and temporary frontiers” which can only be mapped, not blueprinted (Lecerle, 1990, pp. 132-133). Rhizomes produce paradoxical objects, “[t]hey enable us to follow an archaic growth, not to survey the smooth unfolding of an orderly structure” (p. 134). Rhizomatics are about the move from hierarchies to networks and the complexity of problematics where any concept, when pulled, is recognized as “connected to a mass of tangled ideas, uprooted, as it were, from the epistemological field” (Pefanis, 1991, p. 22). Rather than a linear progress, rhizomatics is a journey among intersections, nodes, and regionalizations through a multi-centered complexity. (p. 680)

My approach was to therefore record and reflect upon the reasons *why* certain ideas were “uprooted” over others in the context of researching this complex phenomenon. Furthermore, as Tracy (2010) contends, qualitative researchers should perhaps begin to think more about “quality” than “validity” in their work: “...applying traditional criteria

like generalizability, objectivity, and reliability to qualitative research is illegitimate” (p. 838). Listing eight criteria for “excellent qualitative research”, she portends that a worthy topic; rich rigor; sincerity; credibility; resonance; significant contribution; ethics; and meaningful coherence all assist in the production of quality research.

While great care was taken to ensure that most of these criteria were met, some proved to be more difficult than others. Member checking posed one such problem. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define member validation as “the researcher’s interpretations presented to the subjects of an inquiry for discussion of their validity” (p. 325). Originally devised to accommodate positivist concerns surrounding the rigour and validity of qualitative research, member checks have endured the test of time as a way to establish a project’s trustworthiness. Moreover, member checking has become an important practice in feminist research so as to reduce the power afforded to researchers by including the marginalized voice(s) of participants (i.e. introducing a multi-voiced, plurivocal text). However, as Bradshaw (2001) makes clear, researchers hoping to critically engage with powerful groups in society may wish to think twice before deciding to implement a member checking process.

Cho and Trent (2006) differentiate between two types of validity (transactional and transformational), positing that transactional validity is a consensual process between researcher/researched where the “truth” becomes negotiated (e.g. exemplified by the member check); whereas transformational validity requires a “deeper, self-reflective, empathetic understanding of the researcher while working with the researched” in a quest for social change (p. 322). Therefore, in keeping with the ideals of transformational validity, I decided it was best to address questions of validity in a reflexive journal rather

than rely on member checks. I carried my journal with me at all times, and would periodically write about my thoughts each day. I also continued to use the journal during data analysis to reflect upon what made some pieces of data more important than others, and what led me to interpret them the way I did. In turn, my own multiple identities; those belonging to my participants; the many settings I found myself (dis)placed in; and the discourses that constituted myself and others were all various themes that were discussed throughout the journal.

I *strayed* from the use of member checking so as to *ensure* what is commonly understood as “validity”. As Bradshaw (2001) succinctly notes: “The point regarding qualitative research is that contracts and particularly member checks may need to be approached differently depending on the relationship between a researcher’s standpoint and those of her or his research participants” (p. 202). In other words, my orientation grounded in critical race theory and progressive politics would have certainly clashed with the neo-Conservative underpinnings of a white, male ‘hoosier’ power structure. Putting this on display for participants to see not only would have limited my access altogether, but also severely hindered what interviewees “chose” to reveal in the member validation process. Bradshaw’s (2001) work goes on to illustrate the way member checks with powerful people (in this case, corporate CEOs) undermined his own political orientation rooted in Marxist thought. After learning about Bradshaw’s politics through the member check process, those with power demanded that changes be made to his final draft. If not for a fifteen year embargo option (meaning that Bradshaw’s dissertation would be delayed for fifteen years before being released to the public), the corporate CEOs were intent on having the document rewritten “without any of the quotes”; and that

it be completed with a “business hat” rather than Marxist theory (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 206).

As Buchbinder (2011) makes clear, the researcher transfers power to the researched when member checking. Consequently, what emerges from these negotiations of “truth” does not necessarily imply a result that is more “valid” than the interviewer’s original interpretation. Instead, it can be an attempt to mask the truth (Bradshaw, 2001; Buchbinder, 2011). Moreover, since the epistemological position for those engaged in discourse analysis relies upon the critique of external forces to analyse experience, “validation can become an obstacle rather than an instrument facilitating clearer understanding” (Buchbinder, 2011, p. 108). Such a standpoint clearly contradicts what contemporaneously exists as a Western, humanist belief in the power of a meritocratic individual.

I chose not to employ member checking for these theoretical reasons, but also had more practical justifications as well. Knowing that participants could voluntarily drop out of the research at any given time, I was concerned that member checks would do more to prompt interviewee drop-out than ensure the “validity” of the research. To speak about race or racism in Martinsville *at all* is a sensitive topic for many of its citizens who rather choose to ignore those histories. At the conclusion of one interview, the participant went so far as to issue a threat that I “better not talk about that black/white stuff” or I would be unwelcome in the town in the future. Given these circumstances, it was reasonable to assume that people might voluntarily elect to withdraw themselves from the project altogether if they became aware of my politics/theoretical orientation before submitting a final work. As such, I was unwilling to risk jeopardizing the time, money, and effort I put

into acquiring, gathering, transcribing, and analysing that data during a three week period spent abroad.

Research Sample

Having chosen to utilize fieldwork strategies, I was required to spend an extended period living in the state of Indiana. Financial and time constraints limited my stay in the ‘hoosier state’ to just six weeks, but it was felt as though this provided me with enough time to experience and observe “hoosier culture” so as to formulate a comprehensive analysis. Coinciding with Indiana’s high school, college, and professional basketball seasons I found myself researching between January and March of 2011. However, the state of Indiana is large and comprised of many different counties and cities. Moreover, in deciding where to stay (and recognizing the nature of this project), it was important that I take racial demographics into consideration.

As such, I decided to approach this study with a comparative bend (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1999), so as to fully appreciate the different ways individuals/groups from various parts of the state experience “hoosier culture”. In particular, noting the underlying ‘ruralisation’ of ‘hoosierness’, it was important that I seek to compare a rural/small town to a more urban one. Therefore, I spent three weeks researching in the town of Martinsville, IN and an additional three in the state capital, Indianapolis, IN.

The city of Martinsville is located within Morgan County, and is situated approximately 45 minutes (travelling by car) southwest from Indianapolis. According to the 2000 census data, 98.62% of the tiny Martinsville population (approximately 12,000 people) identified as being white. In contrast, Indianapolis (the capital city of Indiana) –

with a population of approximately 785,000 people⁷ - revealed that only 69.1% of people identified as being white; leaving the remaining percentage to be divided up amongst Hispanic/Latino, multi-racial, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and black members of the community (with the black population overwhelmingly representing 25.5% of the total).⁸ These numbers represent a clear break from Indiana's state figures which align more closely with those from Martinsville (e.g. 87.5% of people in the state identified as white⁹). Consequently, Indianapolis served an important function in opening up a space for counter-narratives to what is defined by predominantly white, small town, rural populations (such as those found in Martinsville) as a singular 'hoosier' culture.

Additionally, each of these cities shares a strong yet uniquely different basketball history. While my analysis is unquestionably meant to extend beyond the basketball court to garner a more holistic understanding of "hoosierness", its contemporary meaning is inextricably linked to the sport itself. In fact, the high school game has, and continues to play an integral role in the production of a 'hoosier' identity and must be implicated accordingly. For example, Indianapolis plays home to Crispus Attucks high school – a once all-black school with a rich academic and athletic history. Widely recognized as one of the greatest basketball players of all time, Oscar Robertson led Crispus Attucks to back-to-back state championships in the 1950s – redefining what "Indiana basketball" looked like during a politically charged Civil Rights era. On the other hand, Martinsville High School is proud to have, arguably, one of the greatest coaches of all time as a respected alumnus in John Wooden. However, school sports (at both the middle school

⁷ According to 2006 US census data.

⁸ Racial statistics based upon 2000 US census data.

⁹ According to 2000 US Census data.

and high school level) have historically acted as a realm through which racial prejudices emerge at the surface (Wertheim, 2005).

Falling in line with the work of Sugden and Tomlinson (1999) and exploring the nexus between investigative research and gonzo journalism, I approached people candidly in public places (museums, gymnasiums, stores, restaurants, etc.). I began casual conversations, and allowed for a natural progression to take place. Inevitably, people would ask about my reason(s) for being in Indiana, at which point I would describe my research and pose the opportunity for them to partake in a scheduled interview at a time and location of their convenience. I left people with my contact information if they chose to follow up with this opportunity; and while some did, many others were never heard from again. I did not enter the field with a predetermined number of interviewees I hoped to speak with, since I wanted to converse with as many people as possible and gain an appreciation for the complexities with which 'hoosiness' was embodied by different populations. Furthermore, I had no idea as to how difficult or easy it would be for an 'outsider' to gain access to interviewees across foreign towns that I had no connection with. As such, I adopted a blend of both convenience and snowball sampling techniques to allow for some flexibility in the precarious recruitment process. Far from adopting the strict guidelines of criterion sampling to ensure a diverse sample, I did make considerable efforts to interview non-white and female participants. My recruitment strategy coincided with the work of Lugosi (2006), who recommends that critical researchers who hope to gain access to powerful groups allow for a comfortable relational flow in the initial conversation, and not introduce specific details of the

research project (i.e., objectives, requesting to use a tape recorder, etc.) until later in the conversation. In the end, I was able to speak with a total of fifteen different individuals.

Ten of these participants were from Martinsville, IN. Emily is an elderly white female who lives (and has lived for her entire life) in Martinsville. Similarly, Bill and Harold took part in the study, bringing forth an elderly white male perspective to the research. In between their forties and sixties, Gary and Henry (both white males) sat down for recorded interviews; while younger adults (in their late twenties to thirties) Karen, Dave, Megan and Kevin (all of whom are white) also volunteered to participate in the interview process. Lastly, Sara – a white teenaged female – agreed to partake in a recorded interview as well.

The remaining five interview participants were found and recruited in Indianapolis, IN. Both Keith and Angela are elderly black Indianapolis residents. Keith has lived in Indiana's capital his entire life, while Angela spent her childhood in the predominantly black, industrial city of Gary, IN. For the purposes of this research, it is also worthwhile to note that Keith played high school basketball for Indianapolis Crispus Attucks when they were the first all-black school to win the state championship in 1955. Lisa is a middle-aged black woman currently residing in Indianapolis but did not move to the state until the 1970s. Lastly, Jeremy and Mike are both men in their late to mid-twenties who spend considerable time in Indianapolis but do not live there. Mike is a multiracial man who oftentimes finds himself working in Indianapolis but today lives in a much smaller Indiana community (and also grew up in one). Jeremy, on the other hand, lives in the small town of Columbus, IN and is a white male.

Data Analysis

Interviews and field notes were transcribed and inputted into the qualitative analysis computer program, atlas.ti. At that point, I began to sift through the data using a concept driven code-list (informed by my readings, observations, interviews, theoretical background, etc.) to begin coding large themes. Taking into account that peculiar and/or outlying themes would emerge, I also allowed for the possibility of data driven codes. In addition, newspaper articles that had been collected and saved using microfilm as well as digitalized notes taken from various books on Indiana history and/or basketball culture were included as part of the atlas.ti data set.

To frame my interpretation of the data, I relied upon a discourse analysis approach. This required that I pay close attention to the ways interviewees meaningfully constructed their realities: “Discourse analysis focuses on how truth effects are created within discourses that are neither true nor false.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 226). Thus, as I analyzed people’s responses to questions, I was specifically interested in exposing “apparent” truths as a contested space situated amidst a dialectical and contradictory historical trajectory. In order to expose these tensions, I made use of Parker’s (2005) approach to discourse analysis where he advocates that researchers constantly ask themselves four important questions: “Why is the text interesting? What do we know of the material out of which it was constructed? What are the effects of different readings of the text? How does the text relate to patterns of power?” (p. 92). With these questions in mind, I carefully and iteratively read through the data, making sure to record my reflections on the hermeneutic process in my reflexive journal.

There were, admittedly, more themes to emerge from the data than what can adequately be discussed given the constraints of a Master's thesis project. Six weeks "in the field" accounted for a sizeable amount of data; not all of which is included in the analysis of this research. Therefore, it is necessary that I make an attempt to explain and/or justify what *has* and *has not* been included in the succeeding pages. For example, the 1986 film *Hoosiers* receives significant attention in chapter five. Surely, I did not require an experience in the field so as to read the movie as a cultural text (i.e. cultural studies methodologies would have likely sufficed in this regard). However, six weeks of fieldwork *did* manage to illuminate the contemporary importance of this film. Through participant interviews, it became evident that *Hoosiers* acts as a symbolic site for many of Indiana's citizens to make sense of their own bodies. Talking with these people allowed for a better understanding of how each person uniquely interprets the film. In addition, the countless pieces of *Hoosiers* memorabilia sold in stores; memorialized images hanging from restaurant walls or museums; quotations plastered on the walls of high schools; and a perfectly preserved gymnasium where the movie was originally filmed (open free to the public, looking exactly as it did in the film and simply known as "Hoosier Gym") became clear indicators that the film deserved a great deal of attention in this thesis. Moreover, the film marks an integral juncture for the purposes of this research, in that it represents the materialized conflation of both the 'hoosier' identity and the sport of basketball. As the film continues both an ideological and material existence in the 'hoosier' state, it increasingly came to present itself as a salient piece of "data".

These are the sorts of difficult decisions that researchers operating "in the field" must make. It seems reasonable to describe the nature of this thesis as rather exploratory

in nature, with the focus being on problematizing a taken-for-granted racialized ‘hoosier’ identity and (basketball) culture. While a number of other interesting, poignant, and related questions emerged from my time spent in Indiana, I made sure to limit my analyses (located in chapters four and five) to what “best” elucidates the complexities of this phenomena.¹⁰ Theoretically, I make it clear that I am most concerned with the racialization of (non) ‘hoosier’ bodies; however, this unfortunately (yet unquestionably) has resulted in the oversight of more nuanced readings into the classed, gendered, sexualized, able-bodied, etc. nature of this body politic. I have included some mention of these factors where it became obvious that they intersected or converged with the primary emphasis of this research. Nonetheless, some of these issues require far deeper analysis (as interview transcripts and field notes reveal) that – for now – lies outside the established boundaries of this work.

¹⁰ I place the term “best” in scare quotes, as I recognize my own subjective role in the determination of this problematic term.

Chapter 4: Interrogating the Discursive Formations of ‘Hoosier’

“What nickname except ‘Yankee’ is better known in the United States than ‘Hoosier’?” The question, originally posed in 1947 by Indiana writer John Bartlow Martin, continues to be one of relevance. As I read his words (inscribed in the wall of an Indianapolis museum), I was confronted with a number of difficult questions: How can a word be so popularly ‘known’ throughout the United States, yet maintain a tirelessly ambiguous existence in the annals of history? What meanings are ascribed to this nickname today; and by whom? Why have these particular meanings managed to prevail over others? And, how does one come to learn these meanings in the first place? The word most certainly wields an omnipresent force throughout the appropriately nicknamed “hoosier state”; mobilized in a variety of different contexts spanning (a non-exhaustive list of) politics, religion, arts, sport, media, business, and everyday lexicon. However, without any understanding of the histories, social conventions, and cultural practices that conjoin to produce twenty first century Indiana society, it would be easy to dismiss “hoosier” as a decontextualized, arbitrary label used in postmodern consumer society to broadly categorize Indiana’s populace. Referring back to Martin’s quote, the word ‘known’ in this instance is likely meant to suggest one’s ability to simply link the word to the state of Indiana – a point that has been made obvious through citizens’ willingness to appropriate, represent, and embody the nickname for themselves. Mike, a multiracial male from Indiana in his mid-twenties, alludes to this idea: “Yeah, if I was talking to someone who was out of state or I went to another state, I’d say ‘Oh yeah, I’m a hoosier.’ But talking to other people from Indiana I never use the term.” Thus, the signified meanings attached to the ‘hoosier’ signifier extend far beyond what the rest of the United

States perceives as a mere “person from Indiana.”¹¹ As Culler (1976) posits: “Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history and the combination at the particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process” (p. 36).

Consequently, the epistemological assumptions rooted in Martin’s rhetorical musing are open to further problematization. There is no one, true meaning to be unearthed with regards to the word ‘hoosier’. No one can ever definitively claim to ‘know’ the meaning of the term, as this free-floating signifier remains ‘up for grabs’ amidst competing and sometimes contradictory historical trajectories. Instead, as Stuart Hall (1997) suggests:

We should perhaps learn to think of meaning less in terms of ‘accuracy’ and ‘truth’ and more in terms of effective exchange – a process of *translation*, which facilitates cultural communication while always recognizing the persistence of difference and power between different ‘speakers’ within the same cultural circuit (p. 11; emphasis in original).

Returning to Mike’s earlier statement, issues of power and difference unquestionably seem to influence his identification (or lack thereof) with the ‘hoosier’ moniker. These vary depending upon the dialogic processes of the moment, or what Hall (1997) might refer to as the presence of “shared cultural codes” (p. 10). Reinforced through practices of representation, the existence of these codes *within Indiana’s cultural framework* conflate to regulate the way Mike understands or ‘knows’ the word in speaking with fellow

¹¹ The concepts of signifier and signified are based off Ferdinand de Saussure’s thinking, whereby he posited that signifiers (i.e. images, words, symbols, etc.) activate a signified meaning in one’s head (i.e. the concept of that ‘thing’). For example, a picture of a telephone (signifier) within a North American context leads one to think of its signified meaning (the idea of a telephone).

Indianans. Underneath this “regime of representation” (Hall, 1997, p. 259) ‘hoosier’ is fixed; and, in recognizing its fixity, Mike dissociates his own identity from the word. In contrast, through his interactions with non-Indianans, the aforementioned shared cultural codes are no longer perceived as being “shared” at all, and thus open up a space for Mike to feel safe in appropriating the term.

To critically interrogate the relations of power and ‘known’ meanings attributed to the word ‘hoosier’ requires that we first reconceptualize it as an embodied *practice* and *experience* (as illustrated in Mike’s scenario). Indiana is, after all, the “hoosier state” – and it is underneath the omnipresent force of this moniker that citizens negotiate their own identity, deportment, and logics according to the normalized “hoosier” social context. In this sense, “hoosier” is more than just a word; and instead represents what McLaren (1988) has referred to as *enfleshment*, described as being: “the dialectical relationship between the material organization of interiority and the cultural forms and modes of material production we inhabit subjectively” (p. 61). In other words, *being* hoosier is to subject oneself to its discursive formations whilst simultaneously reproducing, interpreting, and corporealizing its ideas at the level of the body. Thus, the focus of this chapter is to examine the discourse of ‘hoosier’ (from both a historical and contemporary standpoint) to understand its embedded knowledge/power relations and subsequent effect(s) on the ‘knowing bodies’ constituted therein. This discursive analysis of ‘hoosier’ serves as the basis from which I seek to make sense of those interview responses given in later sections of this chapter. By examining the “theater of the body” we better come to understand how it functions as “both a site for governance as well as a

site for reproduction (or contestation) of the prevailing social order” (Newman, 2010, p. 21).

Secondly, we must conceptualize language as inherently political: “By deconstructing how words and meanings function relative to power, we interrogate the political nature of language and its role in the maintenance of oppression” (Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004, p. 17). As stated, ‘hoosier’ does not have any one true meaning – yet its illusion of fixity is precisely what manages to diffuse power in its respective discourse. French philosopher, Michel Foucault, spent considerable time thinking about the concept of discourse, arguing that people come to meaningfully know, think about, and discuss particular topics within multiple discourses (Foucault, 1978; Hall, 1997; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Beneath these discursive fields, power, bodies, language, signs, and meanings crystallize to form a system of representation that radically shapes the way(s) we understand, regulate, and govern ourselves and Others¹² (Foucault, 1978; Hall, 1997). Therefore, rather than attempt to discover *the* origin of the word ‘hoosier’ (an historical undertaking that has preoccupied the time and efforts of many historians),¹³ I shall instead focus my attention on the moniker’s historical developments through time and space, attempting to unconceal hidden power relations inherent to one’s understanding of ‘hoosier-ness’. Foucault refers to this form of inquiry as genealogy, which has been described by Markula and Pringle (2006) as: “an examination of the relations between history, discourse, bodies, and power

¹² My use of the term “Other” is meant to elucidate the way whiteness becomes normalized and therefore invisible – while difference becomes hypervisible in contrast. This difference is inscribed with meaning and reified through the body of the Other.

¹³ See Graf, 2009 for a detailed literature review of the historical scholarship dedicated to identifying the word’s origins.

in an attempt to help understand social practices or objects of knowledge that ‘continue to exist and have value for us’” (p. 32).

The ‘hoosier’ identity of the twenty first century remains both a social practice *and* an object of knowledge with considerable cultural significance. As such, my goal is to rupture ‘hoosier’ as a unified, singular, fixed, and totally meaningful concept to expose the ways under which this word/corporeality has, and continues to be, structured along axes of race, gender, and class.¹⁴ Following Foucault (1984), who argued that the task of genealogy is to “expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body” (p. 83), my reading of ‘hoosier’ falls in line with the idea that ‘history’ represents more than mere origins. Deviating from a rather large body of historical scholarship that seeks to define the word according to its ‘true’ beginnings or origins, I would like to re-direct our attention to the way(s) in which ‘hoosier’ has come to be known; infused with meaning; deployed; embodied, and represented over time within multiple, complex, changing, and fluid discursive fields. At the centre of any such historical descent lies the topic of race, as it has (and continues to) organize society along racialized lines and hierarchies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2004; Hylton, 2009). Subsequently, to critically analyze the power/knowledge relations¹⁵ that have, and continue to be a part of the ‘hoosier’ identity is to *necessarily* engage with Indiana’s racialized histories so as to uncover “the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty

¹⁴ For the purposes of this paper, ‘hoosier’ body politics are narrowed to examine the intersection of race, gender, and class; however, this is not meant to suggest that ‘hoosier’ is not structured according to other relations of power (e.g. heteronormativity, religion, (dis)abled-bodies, etc.).

¹⁵ Foucault references power/knowledge to describe the process of subjectification, whereby knowing bodies come to learn about themselves, and subject themselves to dominant discourses that are actively constructed and manipulated by those with power.

calculations” (Foucault, 1984, p. 81) responsible for infusing hoosier body politics with sociocultural value.

The Land of Indians

Before delving into the word ‘hoosier,’ we might begin by turning a critical gaze towards the term ‘Indiana’ itself. Indiana, meaning “land of Indians”, became the official name of the state after it separated from the Northwest Territory in 1800 (Stewart, 2008). Named after what used to be a highly populated, vibrant and diverse collection of Native inhabitants from Miami, Wea, Mascouten, and Shawnee tribes (Glenn & Rafert, 1996), the word now stands as a sad reminder of the genocide inflicted by whites on indigenous peoples. Indiana’s 2010 census provides the harrowing statistic that only 0.3% of the state’s total population is comprised of Native Americans – ironically, in what is still known as the “land of Indians.” Beginning as early as 1679, the French, consecutively followed by the British, Spanish, and Americans began to colonize modern-day Indiana (Glenn & Rafert, 1996). As these imperialists systematically exterminated, assimilated, and/or removed Aboriginal peoples from their land, the United States eventually managed to hold “all land previously used and occupied by Native Americans with the exception of a single communally held reserve (Meshingomesiia’s) and a scattering of individual allotments, all held by the Miami” by the year 1840 (Glenn & Rafert, 1996, p. 402). In the forty short years leading up to that point, what had originally been termed the “land of Indians” had, in effect, become the “land of hoosiers.”

Under the leadership of William Henry Harrison who was appointed territorial governor in 1801, the “alienation of Indian lands and rapid settlement of the territory with pioneers [became] his primary objectives” (Glenn & Rafert, 1996, p. 400); resulting in an

expeditious loss of Native American lands between the years 1818 – 1840. Consequently, as Roediger (1991) might argue, this epoch of time marks a critical juncture in the creation of a distinctly racialized and classed ‘hoosier’ body politic. Land, as he suggests, became the central means through which many white, male, settlers sought to establish themselves as economically independent beings; and thus, were encouraged to adopt anti-Indian sentiments paving the way for ‘American Racial Anglo-Saxonism’ (a “brand of whiteness”) to become “intellectually ascendant in the US by 1850” (p. 22). The belief in a sort of ‘hardworking whiteness’ therefore required many of the early American settlers to invent, imagine, and eventually negate a type of Indian ‘savagery’ or “Other” through which whites could begin to construct their own racialized identity.

For this reason, it is striking to note that the term ‘hoosier’ is generally seen to appear as part of the public discourse throughout the earlier half of the 19th century (Graf, 2009). Those ‘American’, white, rugged, and hardworking frontiersmen were, according to most historians, the designated ‘hoosiers’; dichotomized against what continued to act as the ‘Indian’ Other. ‘Indians’ were of course constructed as ‘lazy’ and ‘savage’ in opposition to their ‘hoosier’ counterpart, but they were also rapidly declining in population during Indiana Territory’s formative years. A new breed of man was assuming control of the “land of Indians” – providing an interesting reading into the coinciding rise of the term ‘hoosier’ around this time. To be a ‘hoosier’ was to not be an Indian. In fact, white inhabitant’s unwillingness to embrace or adopt terms such as “Indianian” or “Indianan” might further reinforce the notion that the state’s official, yet “unfortunate” name remained inextricably bound to the “Other.” Moreover, since the Indian “Other” no longer comprised the majority of the land’s population, a term such as ‘hoosier’ better

encapsulated (and appealed to) the state's new, white collectivity of people seeking to define, elevate, and propagate their own racialized identity. Through his extensive research, Graf (2009) reaffirms the point that 'hoosier' has, *and continues to be* far more embraced than alternative monikers such as "Indianian" or "Indianan":

The application of "hoosier" to residents of Indiana rather stifled the debate of the relative merits of Indianian or Indianan to refer to citizens of the state. In both popular writing and reference works neither Indianan nor Indianian is often seen, both terms having long ago yielded to "hoosier." Indiana is nearly universally known as the "Hoosier State," yet that is not its official nickname (p. 10).

In what has remained an overwhelmingly white state since that time, Indiana's affinity for 'hoosier' (and subsequent disavowal of Other designations) suggests the need to further interrogate the historical trajectory of this normalized, corporeal ideology for its deeply embedded racialized significance. As Roediger (1991) rightfully asserts, "the idea that the Indian was disappearing made him less available as a yardstick against which white labour could measure its own position" (p. 23). However, 'hoosier' had already been firmly marked as a space for whiteness; leaving other "Othered" dark bodies to fill the void necessary for white subjects to constitute their own sense of self.

The Racialization of Hoosier

Although relations between Indiana's white settlers and Native Americans at the turn of nineteenth century suggested the (white) *need* or *desire* for a 'hoosier-like' identity, the word seems to have been infused with a number of different meanings. Being a topic of great contestation amongst historians, I do not want to simply rehash the

competing theories and folkloric tales that exist in the available scholarship with the hopes of finding *the* origin and/or meaning of the term.¹⁶ For that matter, I categorically reject the notion that ‘hoosier’ had a singular, true meaning or “essence” to begin with. In turn, the existent body of literature represents what Foucault (1984) might consider: “an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession” (p. 78). In other words, the intensely racialized backdrop under which ‘hoosier’ began to (trans)form a white body politic is too often overlooked by historians wishing to separate the moniker “in its essence” from the context that gave it birth. Furthermore, the intellectual and public debates over the “correct” and/or “real” historical interpretation of the word continue to detract from a more pluralistic conception of the term’s “numberless beginnings” (Foucault, 1984, p. 81). Therefore, I would like to suggest that ‘hoosier’ did not emerge from any one centre, but instead operated within a “nonlinear, multiple, and dissimulated space” (Lather, 1993, p. 683). Ironically, the best evidence for such a claim rests in the vast, multitudinous, complex, and often contradictory writings by historians of the topic. Engaging with these diverse histories – all of which attempt to mark and understand early usages of the term – I wish to proceed forth by illuminating ‘hoosier’ as a markedly racialized word/corporeality that did not, in fact, have a pre-existing “essence” detached from its surrounding social context; and instead became constructed and meaningfully understood *through* such racialized discourse, despite its multifarious nature.

¹⁶ Again, Graf’s (2009) work has been the most comprehensive review of literature conducted on the word’s etymology thus far – and serves as a great resource for those interested in the word’s “potential” origins.

The Early Usage of Hoosier

As the word first began to enter the public consciousness (based upon what we know) in the earlier decades of the 19th century, its linkages to whiteness were overwhelming. There exists a sizeable body of evidence suggesting that the term was used in the upland south as a label of contempt, synonymous with other insults like *cracker* and *redneck* before acquiring its association with Indiana (Graf, 2009; Hoffman, 1835; Mencken, 1965; Piersen, 1995). These were of course white insults, meant to signify what Graf (2009) calls: “a rustic, a bumpkin, a countryman, a roughneck, a hick or an awkward, uncouth or unskilled fellow.” (p. 1). While this might have been true for some populations (likely white and black communities outside Indiana), other historians (Smith, 2007) have argued that ‘hoosier’ was worn proudly without any contemptuous connotations. In his work, Smith (2007) posits that by 1830, Indiana’s white, male, and hard-working farmer-river boatmen became the original ‘hoosiers’ from which the word derived its significance. While his reading is important in explaining ‘hoosier’s’ eventual move towards a positive (rather than contemptuous) embodiment, Smith seems to suggest that the diachronic evolution of the term occurred within a tidy, linear framework – and thus existed apart from any racialized significance in 1830. His assertion that contemptuous meanings ensued *after it first existed* as a depoliticized word presupposes a “teleological movement or a natural process” (Foucault, 1984, p. 88), as opposed to examining the way(s) in which whiteness came to construct Indiana’s boatmen as legitimate embodiments of a newly-emergent “proud” hoosier identity. In fact, two important and often overlooked works by Piersen (1995) and Webb (2002) suggest that the term’s racialized undertones had already been set in motion by 1830. Providing

insight into what eventually became the word's contemptuous significations, both Piersen and Webb focus their attention on the black Methodist preacher, Harry Hoosier, as an important source of the word's meaning. Harry Hoosier, who lived throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, was an exceptional speaker with a unique oratory style that won over the hearts of many listeners. Speaking out against slavery whilst promoting freedom and justice, Hoosier managed to eclipse racial and economic boundaries by appealing to both black and white audiences from a variety of backgrounds. His integrated congregations sparked many white anxieties at the time, which became further roused through his ability to convert whites to the Methodist gospel. Eventually, as Webb (2002) points out, the designation 'hoosier' became a slang term on the Appalachian frontier for those "who were uneducated, so uneducated that they would follow a black minister" (p. 41); and, upon realizing Indiana's Methodist population far exceeded that of any southern state, many Southerners began to contemptuously refer to Indiana's citizenry as 'hoosiers' (Piersen, 1995). Reinforcing the word's inextricable linkage to whiteness, the appropriation of Harry Hoosier's "difference" (i.e. stereotyped blackness) is precisely what seemed to infuse 'hoosier' with its opprobrious meaning for white subjects.

Embracing and Embodying Hoosier-ness in the 19th Century

Nonetheless, Indiana residents willingly adopted the nickname despite its derisive connotations outside the 'hoosier' state. Moreover, the term's deeply embedded whiteness seems to have been an appealing feature to a new class of inhabitants in the "land of Indians," desperately seeking to redefine and upgrade Indiana's identity to better reflect the population therein. Not surprisingly then, 'hoosier' continued to maintain its

racialized significance as Indiana's citizenry came to embrace and embody a white, laborious, masculine, and rural identity – despite whatever meanings Others attributed to such bodies. John Finley's (1866) famous poem originally published in 1833 entitled "The Hoosier's Nest" proudly describes hoosier life according to such terms, and quite poignantly makes note of the white bodies involved: "white heads, bare feet and dirty faces; seemed much inclined to keep their places" (p. 16). In later years, the notion that Finley (and others who appropriated the term) spoke from a generation of settlers who legitimately embodied the 'hoosier aesthetic' left many with the impression that these men *defined* and *lived* 'hoosier'. Indiana poet and writer, James Whitcomb Riley, did not explicitly make mention of their whiteness (he did not have to), but rather focused on constructing a hypermasculine and brash identity inherent to these 'hoosiers':

The real origin is found in the pugnacious habits of the early settlers. They were vicious fighters, and not only gouged and scratched, but frequently bit off noses and ears. This was so ordinary an affair that a settler coming into a bar room on a morning after a fight, and seeing an ear on the floor, would merely push it aside with his foot and carelessly ask, 'Who's ear?' (Graf, 2009, p. 27).

Furthermore, historian Jacob Dunn (1907) focused on the ruralisation and frontiersmen-like character that went into constructing the original 'hoosiers': a group of white, immigrants from Cumberland, England who were accustomed to living in hills such as those found in southern Indiana. In the Cumberland dialect, he argued *hoozer* derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *hoo* (meaning high or hill), and although *hoozer* meant

“unusually large”, one could safely presume the large objects in question were the hills themselves.

Hoosier and the Intersection of Race and Class

Interestingly, those who wore the hoosier moniker with pride were not ignorant of the fact that non-Indianans used the word to denigrate a certain ‘brand’ of whiteness. Yet, this does not seem to have deterred Indiana’s white residents from claiming and reappropriating the word as their own. As early as 1833, there is evidence to suggest that ‘hoosier’ was on its way to becoming a welcomed state-identity: “The term ‘Hooshier’...first applied contemptuously, has now become a *sobriquet* that bears nothing invidious with it to the ear of an Indianian” (Hoffman, 1835, p. 226). However, within the black vernacular of the 19th century,¹⁷ ‘hoosier’ continued to function in racialized terms referring to a lower-class working, white folk. Set within the antebellum period, Allen Johnson, an ex-slave, recalled that *Arkansas* was referred to as a Hoosier State: “It was called a ‘Hoojer’ state when I was a boy. That is a reference to the poor white man. He was a ‘Hoojer’. He wasn’t rich enough to own no slaves and they called him a ‘Hoojer’” (Graf, 2009, p. 21). Johnson’s words are significant in attempting to piece together what might have led white Indiana citizens to so passionately embrace the ‘hoosier’ identity – despite its apparent ‘negative’ connotations. While ‘hoosier’ (in its contemptuous form) almost certainly seems to have derided a lower-class brand of whiteness, *it was still whiteness nonetheless*; and was therefore enough to provide Indiana’s white populace with what Du Bois (1964) has famously called a “psychological wage.” In other words, even if the white worker received limited monetary rewards for

¹⁷ And, the 20th century – although the meaning somewhat changes and will be expanded upon in more detail later in the chapter.

his labour, he still benefitted from the psychological wage of knowing that he, at least, was not a slave. Roediger (1991) elaborates in far greater detail with regards to this point and the subsequent development of an American white working class identity, and is worth quoting at length:

...the pleasures of whiteness could function as a 'wage' for white workers.

That is, status and privileges conferred by race could be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships. North and South. White workers could, and did, define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as 'not slaves' and as 'not blacks'...The existence of slavery (and increasingly of open Northern campaigns to degrade free Blacks) gave working Americans both a wretched touchstone against which to measure their fears of unfreedom and a friendly reminder that they were by comparison not so badly off (pp. 13, 49).

While Indiana was not considered to be a Southern state and eventually fought for the North in the U.S. Civil War, its early settlers and ensuing white population overwhelmingly hailed from Southern states (a migratory trend that persisted into the twentieth century) (Lang, 1954). Consequently, as Roediger suggests, many of these people relied on the memorialization of chattel slavery and the subjugation of black bodies to formulate their own, sense of a 'free' ('hoosier') self.

Of course, the concept of freedom remained powerfully linked to one's whiteness.

Displaced in a new region where chattel slavery was no longer the commanding institution that it once was in the Southern homeland,¹⁸ many of Indiana's new occupants

¹⁸ That is not to suggest that slavery didn't exist in Indiana. Thornbrough (1996) documents that the 1810 census (about the same time Indiana was being heavily territorialized) showed 237 Negroes as slaves, while

had to assert their own whiteness so as to psychologically benefit from slavery's ideological power. Claiming 'hoosier' as an endearing corporeality thus became an attempt to mark one's own endearing white identity – even if that meant a 'lower-class' one¹⁹ – since social, economic, psychological, etc. benefits continued to be afforded to white bodies so long as their black counterpart continued an Othered, binary existence in the public consciousness. As such, the preservation of an oppressive racialized hierarchy remained of utmost importance to the symbolic significance of a white, 'hoosier' body politic. To accomplish this task, Roediger (1991) argues that black subjects were constructed as "anticitizens" (p. 57) during antebellum years – an idea that appealed to many 'hoosiers' in the absence of chattel slavery. Those men who were active in politics reflected Indiana's white Southern population/power structure (Barnhart, 1937; Lang, 1954) expressing considerable reluctance to do away with slavery or its subsequent legitimized/legitimizing racial logics. Leading up to the Civil War, there were a series of constitutions explicitly prohibiting non-white bodies from settling within the state's borders (Thornbrough, 1996). As Thornbrough (1996) documents, many of these laws were unenforceable, but instead represented a symbolic desire to make the 'hoosier' state exclusively white:

Article XIII [adopted in 1851], like the 1831 law, was more symbolic than enforceable, but it reflected the desire of most white Hoosiers to keep the soil of Indiana for whites. That desire was also shown by popular support for the colonization movement which sought to persuade black residents to

the remaining 393 were 'free' (which, for many meant indentured). There were 23,890 whites in Indiana that year.

¹⁹ After all, the classed component of 'hoosier' eventually led to the aforementioned constructions of an idealized rustic, rural, frontiersmen-like masculinity.

leave Indiana and settle in Liberia in Africa, a plan initiated by the American Colonization Society that was supported by many prominent white leaders. The movement met with little success among black residents in Indiana, but it was supported with funds from the state government (p. 13).

Furthermore, Indiana became a “hotbed of Copperhead activity” (Beck, 2003, p. 86) leading up to and during the Civil War.²⁰ Illustrating ‘hoosier’ anxieties over the status of black bodies, the creation of an all-white state did not go far enough to protect the symbolic significance of whiteness in the minds of some, leaving many to voice their support for the South and the “cause” of slavery (Barnhart, 1937; Beck, 2003; Thornbrough, 1996). In the post-Emancipation era, Indiana’s ‘hoosier’ identity could no longer rely on slavery to construct its own working class white identity, but not surprisingly, continued to rest upon the subjugated place of a classed black body as evidenced in the following sea shanty titled *Lowlands or My Dollar an’ a Half a Day*: “A white man’s pay is rather high. Lowlands, lowlands, away my John! Five dollars a day is a hoosier’s pay, Five dollars a day is a hoosier’s pay. A black man’s pay is rather low, my dollar an’ a half a day” (Hugill, 1961). That the word ‘hoosier’ became reinscribed, claimed, and proudly embodied underneath this tense racial climate suggests the extent to which ‘hoosier bodies’ reflected and reified the anxieties of a white working class.

The Threatening “Non-Hoosier” of the 20th Century

It is no wonder, then, that “Indiana produced the KKK’s largest statewide membership and greatest political victories” in the 1920s (Paino, 2001, p. 66). Following

²⁰ Copperhead is a word used to describe democrats who sympathized with, and actively stood up for the Southern cause – that is, the continuation of slavery.

yet another mass migration by white Southerners at the turn of the century, Indiana was becoming home to an overwhelmingly traditional and conservative population concerned with the rapid industrializing North around them. Atop the perceived ‘lack of traditional values’ and ‘moral decay’ that had become synonymous with industrialization, emerged an increasing black population in the ‘hoosier’ state, doubling between the years 1910 – 1930 (Thornbrough, 1961). As Paino (2001) describes: “With the forces of change all around, Hoosiers searched for ways to define their communities around very traditional, pre-industrial values” (p. 66). Sport became an important cultural outlet for the articulation of these values. A baseball team such as the Indianapolis Hoosiers almost certainly came to mean something different than their counterpart in the Negro League, the Indianapolis ABC’s. Their respective team names served as signifiers to reinforce their respective differences.²¹ But politically, ‘hoosiers’ began to embrace the KKK’s nativist rhetoric en masse so as to define and celebrate the traditional values they apparently stood for. *Being* ‘hoosier’ thus came to represent an entirely new set of intersecting values that sought to maintain and uphold Indiana’s white power structure based upon the misguided belief that it was under threat by a changing world. Writing in 1924, famed American author Irvin S. Cobb explained that: “...the Hoosier character was rooted in ‘old-fashioned philosophies springing out of the soil and smelling of the pennyrile and the sassafrack.’ These traditions included ‘old-fashioned cookery, old-fashioned decencies, old-fashioned virtues,’ and, Cobb added, ‘old-fashioned bigotries” (Roberts, 1999, p. 24). Importantly, the differences between this traditional ‘hoosier’

²¹ Supporting the boy’s high school basketball team also became a “cultural response” (Paino, 2001, p. 67) used to articulate traditional values. The deeper meanings embedded within Indiana’s basketball culture and its relation to the ‘hoosier’ identity will be explored in more detail in Chapter five.

body politic and the looming dangers posed by twentieth century urban, industrialized North America came to be articulated through the racialized body.

Following Merleau-Ponty's (2002) belief that people come to understand culture and experience themselves as cultural subjects through the body (and more specifically, Othered bodies), Indiana's history with the KKK and extreme-segregation create an integral point for analysis in making sense of twentieth-century 'hoosiness'. As anxieties surfaced amongst Indiana's predominantly white, rural, Southern, and Protestant population over how to maintain their 'hoosier' identity in a seemingly 'non-hoosier' world, the inscriptions placed upon white and black bodies increasingly came to reflect this dichotomization of old versus new; agrarian versus industrialized; citizen versus immigrant; rural versus urban; morality versus immorality; pure versus impure, etc. Using Hall's (1997) argument that "culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system [whereby] the marking of 'difference' [becomes] the basis [of] that symbolic order which we call culture" (p. 236); the KKK functioned as a political outlet through which differences between white Indiana bodies and those defined as Other became realized and injected with classified meanings. Expanding upon nineteenth century attempts to keep Indiana exclusively white, support for the KKK illustrated the extent to which this belief festered deep inside 'hoosier' culture. At its root, existed the imagery of Indiana's early settlers (i.e. "authentic hoosiers") leading many to envision their whiteness as a meaningful concept that, in part, justified one's claim to Indiana's soil. Yet, such thinking continued to rely upon, and benefit from a demonized Other positioned as threatening the existent status quo. Consequently, the way people came to meaningfully understand and think

about their land, history, and bodies as ‘hoosier(s)’ continued to operate in relation to the racialized binaries of the time.

To protect the power and symbolic value afforded to white bodies, Indiana became increasingly segregated along racial lines. By 1910, a total of eighty percent of the black population lived in cities compared to just forty two percent of the entire population (Thornbrough, 1996). Moreover, by 1930, sixty-seven percent of black citizens were born outside Indiana’s borders (Thornbrough, 1996). These trends continued to persist throughout much of the earlier half of the twentieth century, constructing Indiana’s black bodies as both “urban” (i.e. part of the threatening industrialized world), and “outsider” (i.e. noncitizen) in relation to their ‘hoosier’ counterpart. As a result, the majority of Indiana’s white population maintained a safe distance from the menacing presence of urbanization (and those bodies constituted therein) by persisting to dwell in the “peaceful” and familiar rural countryside.²² This was, in their minds, authentic ‘hoosier’ life. But the cornfields and rolling hills of Indiana’s rural landscape did not represent the same degree of peacefulness to everyone. Within black vernacular culture, the word ‘hoosier’ had evolved to incorporate the ruralisation of twentieth century ‘hoosier’ bodies in a different light. For many of these Othered subjects, ‘hoosiers’ in the backwoods were the same white folks responsible for electing the KKK to state power in the 1920s. Their agrarian lifestyle was far from “traditional” or tranquil, but rather a symbolic representation of their racist desires to be separate from “lesser” black bodies. As Major’s (1994) dictionary entitled *Jumba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang* asserts, the black meanings ascribed to the word

²² The racialization of Indiana’s geographic landscape (urban VS rural; big city VS small town) will be explored in more detail in Chapter five, particularly as high school basketball allows for meanings to be inscribed to the “small town, underdog” and “big city favourite”.

‘hoosier’ throughout the 40s and 50s came to articulate the racially hostile and segregated environment: “Hoosier; Hoogie n. (1940s-1950s) a word sometimes applied to white racists in the Midwest; redneck; hillbilly; filthy; uncouth person; rustic person.”

It is not difficult to see why such meanings persisted in black communities.

Basketball legend and native Indianan, Oscar Robertson (2003), recalls in his autobiography that signs reading “NIGGER, DON’T LET THE SUN SET ON YOU HERE! – dotted the state’s rural landscapes and fields” (p. 6), alluding to the tacit understanding that a traditional ‘hoosier’ (i.e. all-white) lifestyle was actively being preserved in Indiana’s rural locations, and was not to be disturbed or upset by the presence of black bodies.²³ And, as usage of the term ‘nigger’ might suggest – black bodies were far from being discursively constituted as ‘hoosier’. Schools also remained segregated leading up to, and following the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision calling for desegregation in schools. According to Reynolds (1998): “segregated housing patterns, segregative attendance zones, and liberal transfer policies insured that actual segregation survived in many Indiana school districts long after 1954” (p. 179). Indiana’s four all-black high schools were located in some of the state’s largest cities: Indianapolis (Shortridge High School; Crispus Attucks High School), Evansville (Lincoln

²³ I do not wish to give the impression that Indiana’s cities were, in contrast, locations for racial harmony. City zoning ordinances that officially called for segregated neighbourhoods were popular throughout the 30s and 40s. Upon being stricken down, informal policies of segregation persisted in neighbourhoods, whereby “spite fences” were created around white landowners’ lots to prohibit and dissuade blacks from entering; civic leagues emerged so as to prevent whites from leasing to blacks; handbills circulated white neighbourhoods asking if people wanted “a nigger for a neighbour”; and curfews applied to blacks and not whites in the case of Indianapolis (Robertson, 2003, p. 6-7). Even in Gary, IN – which became home to a significant black population – parks were segregated according to colour, as my interview with Angela (an elderly, black woman who grew up in Gary) revealed. Lastly, segregated schools also existed in Indiana’s cities throughout most of the twentieth century in both formal and informal terms.

High School), and Gary (Gary Roosevelt High School).²⁴ However, after the *Brown* decision came into effect many of these schools remained as all-black institutions with the onslaught of white flight – thereby reinforcing the racial dichotomization between Indiana’s “dangerous” cities and “safe” rural and/or suburban lifestyle.

Hoosiers in a Colour-Blind Era

While there continued to be no universal understanding of the word ‘hoosier’ during Indiana’s segregative era, the racial politics existent throughout the state continued to dictate the way people understood the term (Graf, 2009). For some, ‘hoosier’ came to represent the oppressive and terrorizing set of white identity politics internalized and performed by many of Indiana’s rural bodies. But for those who used the term endearingly, *being* ‘hoosier’ was merely attempting to preserve Indiana’s history. It was an experience; a core set of values; and a culture *established by* Indiana’s early settlers from the South. Moreover, it became a conservative response to the kinds of changes occurring throughout American cities. In their willingness to preserve an ‘authentic hoosier’ embodiment, many of the white rural citizens articulated a similar willingness to protect, internalize, and reproduce the transhistorical politics and relations of power embedded inside those ‘hoosier’ body politics. Yet somehow, the underlying racialized meanings associated with the word ‘hoosier’ slowly dissipated in the latter half of the twentieth century, despite what continued to exist as a segregated and racially tense state.

In 1963, American writer Kurt Vonnegut (2000) (an Indiana native) published his novel entitled *Cat’s Cradle*, where an interesting exchange takes place between two

²⁴ The fact that all-black schools were synonymous with Indiana’s big cities further reinforced Indiana’s racial segregation along lines of rural versus urban. The boy’s high school basketball tournament provided a means through which this racialized narrative could unfold and will be explored in far greater detail in Chapter 5.

proud 'hoosiers': "'I'm a Hoosier too,' she crowed. 'Nobody has to be ashamed of being a Hoosier.' 'I'm not,' I said. 'I never knew anyone who was.'"' (p. 90). Throughout the exchange, the characters involved begin to list names of famous people from Indiana, proclaiming them as 'hoosiers' and concluding that "'I don't know what it is about Hoosiers ... but they've sure got something. If somebody was to make a list, they'd be amazed.'"' (p. 90). In his detailed analysis of the word's etymology, Graf (2009) even goes on to say that Vonnegut's characterization of the moniker is akin to "its ... contemporary meaning. It carries no baggage, no sense ranging in meaning from a rustic, unschooled white man to loutish, poor white trash. There is no mountaineer left, no boob, no hick, no boatman, merely a neutral name" (p. 21). Whether or not those who read Vonnegut's words at the time they were published had the same interpretation as Graf seems unlikely given what we know about the word's usage in black communities and the subsequent discrimination black populations continued to face in the 1960s. For that matter, no word is ever completely disjointed from history (e.g. the etymology of the word; the discourse(s) under which the word came to evolve, etc.), nor does it ever exist apart from its dialogic context. Nonetheless, attempts to define Vonnegut's work – and more broadly, the word 'hoosier' itself – as depoliticized and race-neutral has dominated the public consciousness in more contemporary times. Critical race theorists describe this as the discourse of colour-blindness, which posits that race is no longer important in how we think of social relations in a 'post-racial' era. In turn, people have become uncritical of their own whiteness and thereby act as reproducers of negative and/or unequal hierarchies of power that continue to exist in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2005; Hylton, 2009). To disrupt the ensuing silence that has enveloped twenty first century

‘hoosierness’, it is therefore necessary to problematize its usage, representative practices, and subsequent place within various discourses. In developing such a critical orientation, the notion of a depoliticized ‘hoosier’ politic can begin to be exposed for its role in the continued reproduction of an in(di)visible whiteness.

Hoosier Cabins and Historical Representation

There is no shortage of museums in Indiana. Every day, bodies of knowledge embark upon these information spaces to learn about themselves and their cultural identity as ‘hoosiers’. As they read texts, interpret images, hear audio, and “experience” real-life simulations of history, a complex interplay takes place between the hermeneutic understandings of the individual and the seemingly fixed nature of those representations meant to embody the past. History – or more aptly, the way history is constructed by those with power and read within certain discourses – thus, comes to radically shape one’s understanding of self as a cultural subject:

Cultural identity ... is a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being.” It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture, and power (Hall, 2003, p. 236).

Hall’s assertion that cultural identities emerge from *somewhere* is an idea that seemed to dominate the production of knowledge and representation of ‘hoosier bodies’ in the

museums I visited.²⁵ Rather than conceive of ‘hoosier’ as a fluid, historical and always-becoming identity, museums (and much of the existent historical scholarship) have reduced this complex corporeality to a mere object. Locating its point of emergence from *somewhere* in history is believed to define ‘hoosier’, resulting in what has become a competing and contradictory body of literature seeking to unearth the origin of the word. Ignoring the various paths, multiplicities, processes and transgressions that have come to exist as part of ‘hoosiness’ in the last two hundred or more years, people’s hopes rest on the belief that the word’s ‘true origin’ can be identified so as to reveal its ‘intended’ meaning(s).

While scholars continue to hopelessly debate over the ‘original’ meaning of ‘hoosier’, most are in agreement that it became popularized around the time of Indiana’s first settlers. As such, disagreements over the first utterances of the word remain more of an intellectual exercise than anything. While many ‘hoosiers’ are aware of the term’s ambiguous origins, the agreed-upon common sense notion that Indiana’s settlers were the first referents to willingly or unwillingly embody the moniker is far less disputed by historians or the public at large. Consequently, these ‘hoosier bodies’ serve a fundamental role in providing certainty to a word that has considerable uncertainty. Indiana citizens may never come to know the “authentic” meaning(s) ascribed to ‘hoosier’ in a linguistic sense, but at least they can know the bodies and lifestyle of early frontiersmen who *were* ‘hoosiers’. The resulting objectification of early ‘hoosier bodies’ has led to the construction of a *pure* ‘hoosier’, through which meanings are actively inscribed, produced, and consumed for the benefit of those living in the contemporary moment.

²⁵ I visited the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame (New Castle, IN), the Monroe County History Center (Bloomington, IN), and the Indiana Historical Society (Indianapolis, IN).

Today's Indiana populace does not have to wrestle with the anxiety that emanates from a multifarious, complex, and intensely political history that threatens to disrupt and challenge their very identity. Instead, they can compare their own relative 'hoosiness' to the objectified image of an early 1800s settler, whose body has been inscribed with legitimized meanings.

Despite their apparent fixity, these images do not belong to what Hall (2003) calls an "essentialized past". They are borne out of a much larger historical narrative that continues to influence the way people represent or construct history today. Appropriately then, any reading of these images must not only ask what they can reveal about the past, but also the present and future for those in the process of *becoming* 'hoosier'. In this regard, the popularized representation of a 'hoosier cabin' serves a striking point for analysis.²⁶ These cabins have become symbols of authentic 'hoosiness' in the twenty first century, meant to connote its underlying values and meanings. When Indiana's first settlers began their voyage throughout the state, they often constructed log cabins as a temporary place of shelter. As one folk tale professes, the word 'hoosier' came into existence as many of Indiana's frontiersmen knocked on the doors of these homes asking "who's there?" ... eventually leading to "hoo-sier?" Moreover, the cabin served as the focal point to Marcus Motes' memorialized 1844 painting²⁷ entitled *The Hoosier's Nest*, featuring an all-white family with a husband working outside and his wife and four children peering out the front door of a log cabin in the middle of a forest (see Appendix A). This iconographic imagery surrounding 'hoosier life' in the cabin continues to be

²⁶ Indiana license plates in the early 80s featured the words "Hoosier State" overlaying the imagery of a rural landscape and pronounced log cabin.

²⁷ As Graf (2009) acknowledges, there is considerable debate over whether the 1844 date is accurate or not. Some believe the painting was completed as late as 1891.

romanticized in texts and museums alike, but more importantly acts as a space for the construction of meaning. The cabins are not merely log cabins, but ‘hoosier’ cabins. Importantly then, they act as larger symbols whereby contemporary readers can understand their own cultural identity.

As I toured one particular museum, an entire replica ‘hoosier cabin’ was featured as one of (if not *the*) centrepiece attractions included therein. In this exhibit, people are given the opportunity to see, touch, and experience what it was like to live as ‘hoosiers’ in the nineteenth century. Paying close attention to the language displayed throughout the cabin (besides the obvious appropriation of the word ‘hoosier’), the deeper meanings attributed to this *lived experience* became clear: “...the cabin came to symbolize the qualities of those pioneers – resourcefulness, enterprise, and an undaunted spirit ... the people of these days were thrown upon their own resources” (Field Notes).

Appropriately, the cabin is modestly outfitted with a fireplace, spinning wheel, bed, crib, rocking chair, and small items used for cooking and/or fabricating articles of need. The resulting representation of ‘hoosiness’ is one of simpler times, rearticulating the image of a rustic, rugged, and economically meagre lifestyle. In addition, many of these ‘hoosier’ characteristics are inculcated with romanticized depictions of a hard-working, industrious, and dedicated class of people – providing a lens into the way Indiana natives come to see themselves.

But *who* is really being referred to in the glorification of ‘hoosier’ cabins? And *for* whom are these meanings meant to benefit? It is important to remember that the White Southern population inhabiting these cabins en masse did not reflect all of Indiana’s population in the first half of the nineteenth century. As noted, Native Americans, albeit

it in limited numbers, still sought to preserve and hold onto their land. For this indigenous group of people, the white ‘hoosier’ population was far from being an innocent, hard-working community of rustic frontiersmen. Instead, they – and their white skin – came to represent the terrorizing force responsible for murdering, displacing, and erasing a people and culture from what used to be the ‘land of Indians’. Similarly, the white ‘hoosier’ body came to symbolize oppression to black populations, as their own subjugated position as slave, “nigger” and/or “anticitizen” (Roediger, 1991, p. 57) was made distinguishable in contrast to the lower-class, rustic, white man of the nineteenth century. While it is necessary that one recognize whiteness (and more specifically, the ‘hoosier’ identity) as being inextricably linked to a racist past, this is not the only point I’m trying to make. Certainly, an appreciation for this history changes the way we think of ‘hoosier’ identity politics today. However, what I’m suggesting is that by emphasizing mere log cabins as symbols of ‘hoosiness’, the political and racialized context under which ‘hoosier’ bodies derived their meaning becomes at best distorted, and at worst erased.

In other words, the log cabin’s function as a depoliticizing symbol of history is but one of many examples of how Indiana’s violent and agonizing past has been renegotiated in the colour-blind era. That is not to say the image of the cabin or the word ‘hoosier’ somehow manage to altogether escape history. Clearly, these signifiers continue to be constructed and interpreted according to a much larger historical trajectory imbued with power. But, for today’s audiences such power has become masked ... or rendered altogether invisible and thereby preserved. To begin with, the ‘hoosier’ experience being referred to through the imagery of the cabin automatically marginalizes Indiana’s non-white subjects. Those who are unable to relate to the dominant constructions of an

innocent or pure ‘hoosier’ lifestyle (represented through the log cabin) are left to experience themselves as Other in a state proudly referred to as “The Hoosier State.” Hall (2003) makes this point clear by illuminating and exposing the power that is afforded to those (often white) bodies responsible for moulding and constructing representations: “They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’” (p. 236). The hegemonic understanding that Indiana’s nineteenth century log cabin represents a romanticized part of the state’s history and ‘authentic hoosier’ life is reinforced by the power of colour-blind discourse. Thousands of Othered Indiana citizens, who consider themselves just as legitimate citizens as their white ‘hoosier’ counterparts, are thereby forced into accepting their “different” histories, cultural legacies, and interpretations as illegitimate, biased, or counterintuitive to the established historical narrative.

Problematically then, Indiana – as the “Hoosier State” – embraces and promotes images such as the log cabin and symbolically links them to the word ‘hoosier’ without acknowledging these signifiers’ deeper social and political significance.²⁸ The assumption is that Indiana’s population (in its entirety) can share in the collective, singular experience that is inscribed in the imagery of early nineteenth century colonialism. In reality, however, such readings only serve to benefit and further privilege Indiana’s white population by suggesting a romantic form of “imperialist nostalgia” (hooks, 1992, p. 25) through which they can safely understand and formulate their own contemporary identity as ‘hoosiers’. In turn, the deeply embedded relations of power that

²⁸ License plates featuring: log cabins, early settlers (hoosiers) with rifles, and rural backdrops were common sightings throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. Indiana’s official state seal also features an early settler using an axe to chop a tree, with rolling hills providing a countryside background and a wild buffalo jumping over a log in the picture’s foreground. This image resonated so deeply with some, that a large sticker was made for those who wanted to display it as a decal on their car.

exist as part of ‘hoosiness’ are reinforced today. For example, the same museum showcasing a ‘hoosier cabin’ had no similar exhibits or information on Indiana’s Native American population preceding or following ‘hoosier’ inhabitancy. Nor was there much, if any, mention of black experiences up to the mid-twentieth century. The insinuation is clear that ‘real hoosiers’ were those rustic, white, Southern men who settled Indiana; whose experiences continue to define ‘hoosiers’ today. Certainly, the speaking voice in this instance is one of privilege – laying claim to history, and attempting to speak for all Indianans from a “raceless” position. But as scholars have pointed out, such a position constitutes what might better be conceptualized as a white paradigm:

In Western contexts, that shift has helped to construct the normative nature of how the “White paradigm” frames what we are as a society and what we should aspire to be. It is an archetype that is intrinsically inaccessible to the racially oppressed; so through various articulations of power that solidify and speak to this culture of “difference,” we become positioned as *other* in our own lands. In effect...we become locked in a process through which we must continually question our claim to space, place and a sense of belonging. Our voice, languages and “selves” are interpellated through the voices, languages and “selves” of our oppressor so we come to know ourselves as *other* through their eyes as well as through our own experience (Sefa Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004, p. 69).

Thus, the non-white individual is rendered silent in his/her inability to relate to (or ability to feel oppressed by) the established representations and legitimized histories of true and/or pure ‘hoosiness’. These histories are, after all, deceptively positioned as

“colour-blind”; and as Fanon (1963) notes, not meant to benefit the ‘inferior’ Other: “The past is revered. The culture which has been retrieved from the past to be displayed in all its splendour is not his [colonized] national culture” (pp. 149-150). As a result, ‘marked’ populations become haunted by their own (non)‘hoosier’ status (i.e. Indiana citizenship), as it precariously remains subject to constant scrutiny by those seeking to regulate normalized ‘hoosier’ body politics.²⁹ Evidently, despite the colour-blind era that seeks to distort and/or erase the complexity of the word ‘hoosier’ – it continues to function in very political terms in the twenty first century.

Enacting Hoosier in the Political Sphere

Use of the term ‘hoosier’ has become commonplace within Indiana’s political discourse. As I scoured through daily newspapers, listened to talk radio shows, and watched the local news, the word was often called upon by commentators and politicians alike to describe Indiana’s collective populace. But a closer inspection reveals that the ‘hoosier’ identity is often invoked to articulate a particular ideology and/or set of beliefs. That is not to say this is always the intention of the speaker (in most cases, politicians and commentators use the word passingly to refer to the state’s broader citizenry). However, it is noteworthy that ‘hoosier’ acts as a “safe” or appropriate term for those who *do* seek to claim and inject it with neo-conservative connotations. Moreover, these underlying meanings do not simply disappear depending upon the speaker’s intent. As a result, the republicanisation of ‘hoosier’ has further dichotomized Indiana’s populace across political divisions whilst reinforcing the state’s Conservative reputation and polity.

²⁹ These relations of power also come to be internalized by individuals who regulate according to dominant discourses. Foucault’s thinking around bio-politics and governance are helpful theoretical lenses to further explore this idea, and will be incorporated into later stages of the thesis upon getting into the topic of subjectification.

For many of Indiana's past and present politicians, the romanticized histories and folkloric tales behind the word 'hoosier' serve as the foundation to advancing a Conservative agenda. In particular, the notion that 'hoosiers' were particularly hard-working people is often called upon by those in the political realm as a means to reinforce the mythologized powers of the American dream. That is, everyone has an equal opportunity and equal access to succeed in life so long as they work hard enough; while those who are unsuccessful in their pursuits have only themselves to blame. Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumanchery-Luik (2004) suggest that such ideological positions are not so much conservative as they are neoliberal and fundamentally democratic in their disposition today. In other words, colour-blind discourses work to conceal forms of institutionalized and systemic racism such that their existence does not even enter the public consciousness when evaluating one's ability (or lack thereof) to succeed. Indiana's politicians have often relied upon the folkloric tale of Samuel Hoosier – a man who by all accounts, did not exist – to reinforce romanticized depictions of state history whilst creating a means for citizens to think of themselves as 'hard-working' bodies. As the folktale goes, Samuel Hoosier "built the canal at the Falls of Ohio...[and] preferred to hire men from the Indiana side of the river, because he found them to be harder workers than those from Kentucky." (Graf, 2009, p. 25).

Indiana's populace is thrown underneath this political characterization and forced to negotiate with its broader discursive implications in the twenty first century. To appreciate what these are, it is first necessary that I briefly contextualize the current state of American (and more specifically, Indianan) political discourse. Across the United States (and the Midwest in particular), poor and working class families have come under

attack by the interests of corporate plutocrats who remain ideologically vested in the rhetoric advanced by Republican party politics (West & Ehrenberg, 2011). Despite the growing disparity between upper and lower classes of American society and the increased inhibition of social mobility, a crisis narrative of “wasteful spending” has emerged from the right calling for more conservative and fiscally responsible economic policies (Wray, 2005). Mobilized by the failing economy (which has been framed as the worst in American history since the Great Depression), Republicans have targeted social welfare programs (those aimed at helping disenfranchised groups like the poor, women, and/or people of colour) as constituting “wasteful spending” (Robbins, 2004; Wray, 2005). In contrast, the trillions of dollars annually spent on national defense; waging three overseas wars; upholding the prison-industrial complex through a fake war on drugs; and, corporate welfare sadly comprise what is considered to be “necessary spending.”

Nonetheless, Indiana – led by Republican state governor Mitch Daniels – has seen this ordering of priorities take effect through state legislation targeting poor and working class communities. According to the logic, social programs specifically tailored to assist these people are no longer economically justifiable in an age that calls for fiscal responsibility; and more importantly, no longer serve any social or political function given the progress made in American society (Robbins, 2004). Consequently, the programs/services are constructed as unnecessary “luxuries” or “privileges”, whose users have unfairly benefited from and/or exploited in the modern age. In turn, these people must come to grips with “reality” by achieving success and happiness through simple “hard work”. Not only does this narrative act as the basis for the American dream, but it also plays a fundamental part in the determination of ‘hoosier’ bodies. That is to say,

‘hoosiers’ – as they are thought of within Indiana’s political climate – are characterized by a superior work ethic. Those who continue to struggle in the absence of social welfare programs are constructed as being ‘non-hoosier’ in their “unwillingness” or “inability” to work hard enough to realize America’s promise. Not surprisingly, the production of a ‘hard-working hoosier aesthetic’ comes to serve an important political function in maintaining Indiana’s conservative polity.

My time spent in Indianapolis coincided with a proposed piece of anti-union legislation introduced by Governor Daniels’ cabinet – providing a valuable window into working class negotiations of a ‘hard-working hoosier’ identity. The arguments put forth by Indiana’s Republican state officials (and those from other Midwestern states such as Wisconsin and Ohio) in favour of abolishing public workers’ rights to unionize are beyond the scope of this project and have acted as a subject of inquiry for many economists and labour historians. However, more to the focus of this paper are the effects this “attack” had (and continues to have) on racialized, classed, and gendered ‘hoosier’ bodies. As one of the thousands of protesting bodies in attendance at the Indiana statehouse building, I bared witness to a variety of rally signs. One in particular stood out amongst the crowd, reading: “SUPPORT HOOSIERS; NOT SPECIAL INTERESTS”. I was intrigued by this sign, for the obvious appropriation of the term ‘hoosier’ by a largely working class and (not exclusively, yet overwhelmingly) middle-aged, male, and white citizenry. But I was just as interested in the sign’s labelling of “special interests.” What – and more importantly – *who* was being referred to underneath this ‘non-hoosier’ characterization unworthy of support? In North America today, most people “experience democracy in almost entirely economic terms” (Dei, Karumanchery, & Karumanchery-

Luik, 2004, p. 110). Subsequently, the injustices felt by those appropriating the ‘hoosier’ moniker were sincere, though hardly unforeseeable given the economic threat Indiana’s proposed austerity measures posed to the middle class. Unsurprisingly, tens of thousands of people from across Indiana descended upon Indianapolis to protest and “support hoosiers” in their *legitimate* fight for rights; eventually leading Governor Daniels to drop the bill (or, most likely return to it at a later date).

But on the same day of Daniels’s announcement, Indiana’s senate passed another piece of legislation targeting a different group of citizens. Immigration Bill S.B. 590 was proposed to give state and local police officers the authority to request proof of citizenship if the officer *suspected* someone might be an illegal resident.³⁰ In contrast to the tens of thousands of largely white, male protesters who voiced their displeasure with anti-union legislation, S.B. 590 drew far less criticism amongst ‘hoosiers’. Instead, the number of protesters gathering outside the Indiana statehouse was significantly smaller. They were also far more diverse across lines of gender, age, race, and class. Where had the support for/from ‘hoosiers’ gone? Or, had ‘hoosiers’ already supported their brethren in the fight to preserve union rights? Underneath the narrative of ‘hoosiers’ versus ‘special interests’, S.B. 590’s protestors might have been constructed as advancing ‘special interest politics’ in their fight for social justice. Their cries for racial equality went largely unheard amidst a population more receptive to, and understanding of economic inequities:

Our agendas are muted under the socially charged labels of “special interest politics” and “reverse racism.” This divisive visibility is in many

³⁰ This bill was modeled after Arizona’s already-controversial S.B. 1070, which had drawn criticism from those on the left concerned with its underlying reliance on racial profiling.

ways a “guarantee of order” in that our oppressor controls the means by which our resistance is validated in the mainstream (Dei, Karumanchery and Karumanchery-Luik, 2004, p. 90).

Rather than validate the voices of S.B. 590’s protestors, many of the same ‘hoosiers’ to speak out against anti-union legislation (some of whom considered themselves democrats or liberals) remained silent. Their relative silence was deafening indeed, lending a sort of tacit approval and/or acceptance to the immigration bill’s underlying agenda. Moreover, the conspicuous lack of white bodies unwilling to protest against racial inequality articulates the extent to which ‘hoosiers’ continue to reinforce Conservative logics.

Oppression, inequality, and injustice are all terms defined by the ‘hoosier’ power structure (i.e. patriarchal whiteness)³¹ and therefore must be problematized as sites for privilege. As Johnson (2008) would likely suggest, the privilege afforded to ‘hoosier’ bodies almost certainly came to influence what issue(s) received attention, support (or lack of support), and legitimacy for those with decision-making power:

Privilege increases the odds of having things your own way, of being able to set the agenda in a social situation and determine the rules and standards and how they’re applied. Privilege grants the cultural authority to make judgments about others and to have those judgments stick. It allows people to define reality and to have prevailing definitions of reality fit their experience. Privilege means being able to decide who gets taken seriously,

³¹ The patriarchal nature of ‘hoosier’ bodies will be expounded upon in later sections of the thesis. However, it is worthwhile to note at this point of the paper that Indiana became the first U.S. state to completely defund Planned Parenthood in April of 2011. Protests occurred – however, this time women (and women of colour) comprised the majority of outspoken critics. Nonetheless, the legislation passed putting an end to government funding towards the health and well-being of women’s bodies (many of whom are poor, and/or disproportionately non-white).

who receives attention, who is accountable to whom and for what. And it grants a presumption of superiority and social permission to act on that presumption without having to worry about being challenged (p. 117).

Those who benefitted from Governor Daniel's decision to abandon anti-union legislation also benefitted from his eventual decision to pass S.B. 590 and defund Planned Parenthood.³² The established hierarchy of power remains intact, and 'hoosiers' can continue to define themselves in opposition to those marked as Other. Similar to Indiana's early settlers who appropriated the 'hoosier' moniker to differentiate themselves from black and Native American populations; anti-union protesters relied upon their classed, gendered, and racialized bodies to similarly construct a 'hoosier' identity *different* from the types of bodies found advocating in favour of 'special interest' (read: racial justice) politics. Upon the conclusion of Indiana's anti-union protests, most safely retreated back to their suburban homes never to be heard from again. While their relative silence on the issue of S.B. 590 insinuated an implicit and symbolic endorsement of the immigration bill, those on the far-right were far less apprehensive to speak out in favour of the proposed bill. Moreover, their own 'hoosier' identity (and the implied 'non-hoosier' status of illegalized Other bodies) became an implicit component to understanding the significance of these people's counter-protests.

'Hoosier Nation' and the Far Right

Howard Winant (1997) has attempted to distinguish between the various divisions on the political Right, so as to better understand their respective influence on the status of those white bodies constituted therein. His analysis is useful inasmuch that it provides a

³² I use these three pieces of legislation as examples, as they all came to be discussed during or around the time I spent in Indiana.

framework to understand the complexity and multifaceted nature of whiteness; however his finished work runs the risk of creating an over-simplified taxonomy under which people's political identities can be neatly categorized. Therefore, I shall proceed forth by referencing his ideas whilst remaining open to the possibility that people and political advocacy groups oftentimes blur and complicate the many distinctions laid out in Winant's work.

Having already made use of the terms "neoliberal" and "neoconservative" (and about to expound on them here), I would like to clearly outline how I come to understand these often-problematic characterizations. Critics on the left have rightfully targeted neoliberalism for its role in advancing privatized interests and corporatized/corporatizing logics into the realm of social policy (Robbins, 2004; West & Ehrenberg, 2011; Winant, 1997). With its focus on market forces, consumer spending, efficiency, and the belief in a liberal individualized subject, it is argued that neoliberalism severely undermines or completely overlooks deeply institutionalized and systemic social inequalities. Along these lines, critical race theorists (Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2005; Hylton, 2009; Winant, 1997) specifically focus their critique on the damaging effects of neoliberalism's colour-blind discourse. They argue against the dominant belief that 'race' somehow escapes criticism in the twenty first century, and that we (North American society) have somehow graduated to a "post-racial" era where everyone is born into a meritocratic society and provided with equal opportunities. If anything, as Winant (1997) argues, (neo)liberalism only recognizes social inequality inasmuch that it has to do with class – referring to it as "class reductionist" (p. 81). Even then, as other critics (Robbins, 2004) suggest the mantra of neoliberalism is such that

lower classes of the economic spectrum are still asked to “pull up their bootstraps” and realize the promises of the free market.

Thus, neoliberalism takes on a decidedly conservative stance, paving the way for a complimentary intersection of neoconservative identity politics (Newman & Giardina, 2008). As outlined in Newman and Giardina’s (2008) work, “hyper-White, hypermasculine, (neo)conservative mediated identities have been sowed, nurtured, and, in terms of political and cultural capital, harvested” (p. 481) as a means to create a particular space of identification (one that is packaged, commodified, and “sold back” to consumers within the logics of neoliberalism). Despite this “overlap” (Winant, 1997, p. 81), neoconservatism departs (somewhat) from the racial politics of neoliberalism through its more overt whiteness. Not only does neoconservatism seek to deny the existence of ‘race’ (Winant, 1997), but it also looks to revise and remediate history and the broader cultural sphere according to an “unproblematic” white epistemology.

If much of what has been covered thus far falls under Winant’s labels of the “New Right”, “Neo-Conservatism” and “Liberalism”³³, the Conservative advocacy group titled *Hoosier Nation* comes to embody ideological elements that are best expressed by Winant’s characterization of the “Far Right.” Before delving into the meanings ascribed to *Hoosier Nation*’s ‘hoosier’ bodies, I should first begin by outlining how they differ from the ‘hoosier’ identity politics covered thus far. Benefiting from neoliberal espousals of colour-blindness, ‘hoosier’ has deceptively managed to construct its contemporary meaning apart from its racialized past. Instead, class has taken prominence in the discursive construction of ‘hoosier bodies’ – amounting to the idealized imagery of a

³³ Winant’s description of liberalist discourse closely resembles what many other scholars have referred to as “neo-liberalism” (a term that is more commonly used throughout this paper).

hard-working, middle-class citizenry. This “class reductionist...approach to race” (Winant, 1997, p. 81) obscures the cultural and historical significance attached to whiteness, conceiving of class and race as two distinct and separate entities. Nonetheless, as I hope to have outlined, class and race remain inextricably bound to one another in the creation of a ‘hoosier’ body politic. Always existent but sometimes invisible, whiteness is often concealed in the formation of a neo-liberal or neo-conservative cultural-political ‘hoosier’ identity (e.g. the historical representation of a “hardworking hoosier” aesthetic; anti-union protests and predominantly (white) middle-class activism). In other instances (e.g. Indiana’s immigration bill: S.B. 590) ‘hoosier’ whiteness becomes more recognizable – embodying what Winant (1997) refers to as the politics of the “New Right”. That is, a political orientation designed to “present itself as the tribune of disenfranchised whites” (Winant, 1997, p. 78). Crossing the threshold of colour-blindness, race is meaningfully discussed by the New Right through subtextual or coded language, resulting in nativist and/or populist rhetoric that “revives...anti-immigration hysteria” and “associates whiteness with a range of capitalist virtues: productivity, thrift, obedience to law, self-denial, and sexual repression” (Winant, 1997, p. 78). Once more, I do not wish to insinuate that ‘hoosier’ – as a cultural-political identity – neatly falls underneath any *one* of Winant’s classificatory racial projects. Instead, what I am attempting to illustrate is that racialized, classed, and gendered ‘hoosier’ bodies come to negotiate whiteness in myriad ways, often complicating and blurring Winant’s political continuum.

But, for members belonging to the conservative advocacy group *Hoosier Nation*, there are no such attempts to conceal whiteness or to speak through racially coded

language. In fact, whiteness is made visible and placed at the forefront of the organization's political agenda: "*Hoosier Nation's* mission is to defend Indiana's Western and Christian heritage, including the racial inheritance from which our White communities and American traditions emerged." (Hoosier Nation, 2010, ¶ 1). *Hoosier Nation*, thus, comes to represent Winant's (1997) conception of the "Far-Right"³⁴:

In the far Right's view, the state has been captured by 'race mixers' and will have to be retaken by white racial nationalists in order to end the betrayal of 'traditional values' that a racially egalitarian and pluralistic national politics and culture would portend (p. 77).

This attack against multiculturalism is made clear through *Hoosier Nation's* slogan: "*taking it back*" – but more importantly for the purposes of this research, comes to be meaningfully articulated through the group's appropriation of the word 'hoosier' itself.

It is symbolic that a collection of people who fall in line with *Hoosier Nation's* racial politics willingly appropriate and embody the term 'hoosier'. How does it serve to legitimate and/or reinforce their cause for whiteness? In a book written by the founder of *Hoosier Nation* (and titled after the organization), the author makes it clear that 'hoosier' bodies are white bodies. Referencing Indiana's early white settlers, Parrot (2010) claims the word on behalf of Indiana's white citizenry and asks that Indianans seek to reclaim a more *pure* 'hoosier' aesthetic: "We have to stop and reflect on our Hoosier identities, celebrating what we retain of our heritage and reviving what we've lost" (¶ 35). This includes an apparent "hillbilly" (¶ 24) lifestyle that is not to be denigrated or demonized

³⁴ Winant differentiates between fascists and neo-fascists in the Far-Right. *Hoosier Nation* might best be conceived of as neo-fascist in their mission/vision. They promote a non-violent approach and engage with mainstream politics – which, according to Winant, is contradictory to those who represent the fascist far right.

(as is often “unfairly” the case within liberal discourse), but rather embraced, celebrated, and *practiced* by white bodies.

This articulation of whiteness has obvious parallels with Indiana’s “first hoosiers”, who appropriated the state-moniker for many of the same reasons. In both instances, the word was/is claimed with derogatory connotations “replaced”, so as to embody and reinforce the logics of white supremacy. Yet importantly, as Indiana’s history demonstrates, this identification with whiteness has resulted in an ugly, racist, and violent past. As James Baldwin famously said, ‘As long as you think you’re white, there’s no hope for you’; meaning, those who see their whiteness as culturally, historically, politically, psychologically and/or economically significant often miss the deeper implications associated with this political stance. That is to say “the assertion of the white race is intimate with slavery, segregation, and discrimination” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 32) and is “*nothing but* oppressive and false” (Roediger, 1994, p. 13; italics in original). For those who belong to far-right organizations today, the active promotion of whiteness is rationalized through a belief that they preach ‘heritage not hate’, and/or maintain a “right” to mobilize if black, Latino, Asian, etc. populations are given this same opportunity (Newman & Giardina, 2008; Winant, 1997). Yet, the enacted narratives and messages that emerge from the far-right’s core continue to advance bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice in the contemporary era.

The use of stereotypes in the creation of a dangerous or threatening Other become integral to the positive formulation of one’s own white identity and heritage. *Hoosier Nation* accomplishes this task by demonizing Indiana’s urban, racialized landscape so as

to position its rural, white communities as both “authentic” and “pure” to the ‘hoosier’ lifestyle:

While the state of Indiana is overwhelmingly White, ethnic ghettos of Blacks and Hispanics have turned sections of our largest and most promising cities into third world ‘No-Go’ zones. The financial costs of supporting these slums have only worsened as these slums have grown. Their astronomical rates of rape, murder, and theft have shattered thousands of Hoosier families (Parrot, 2010, ¶ 59).

Criminalizing black and Hispanic bodies, these Others are constructed as antithetical to ‘hoosier’ values and have therefore contributed to the apparent “multicultural crisis” that Indiana now faces. Taking it one step further, Parrot (2010) attempts to explain these groups’ “unwillingness” and “inability” to adapt to the existent white power structure (i.e. ‘hoosiness’) by conceiving of race in biological terms: “None of these groups wish to become Hoosiers, and it’s doubtful that they’re even capable. They have their own heritage, their own ideas about what their communities are to look like, and their own plans for the future” (Parrot, 2010, ¶ 62). Underneath this imaginary landscape, *Hoosier Nation* stands for the protection of white power and privilege by altogether denying the existence of social inequalities and opting to define Others as “naturally” deviant.

The far-right embodiment of a ‘hoosier’ identity is but one of *many* ways whiteness comes to be meaningfully understood and articulated throughout Indiana’s cultural and political spheres. Though groups such as *Hoosier Nation* explicitly and overtly make it clear that the demonym continues to maintain its racialized undertone, these meanings are oftentimes buried underneath coded language, or articulated through

corporealized practices of the body itself. In other words, *Hoosier Nation*, political rallies, log cabins, folkloric tales, and many other pedagogical mechanisms conflate to produce a fluid space whereupon ‘hoosier’ comes to be meaningfully understood. More importantly, as bodies internalize these knowledges, they come to act as reproducers of power. The body thus becomes a crucial point for inquiry. Subject to the multitudinous, omnipresent and historical force of ‘hoosiness’, bodies must negotiate underneath this complex discursive field to construct their own cultural identity (i.e. subjectification). In that sense, I would now like to redirect my attention to the experiences of racialized, classed, and gendered bodies with the hope of understanding what it means to *live* as ‘hoosier’ or ‘non-hoosier’ in the contemporary age.

Thinking Hoosier, Truth, and Reflexivity

With the understanding that knowledge is always co-created, any reading of participant responses would be incomplete without acknowledging my own role in the production of these momentary, dialogic, and temporal exchanges of words. To borrow a metaphor from Riessman (2008), “investigators carry their identities with them like tortoise shells into the research setting” (p. 139). These multiple, fragmented identities are never fixed, but rather subject to time, space and the dominant discourses located therein. Moreover, they act as sites for the transmission of power. For example, my identity as “researcher” most certainly introduces a power dynamic to interviews; not only influencing what is said, but also how these words become analysed, interpreted, and written about (Richardson, 2000). Intersecting with my own positionality as a white heterosexual male (in a racist, homophobic, and patriarchal society), interviewee responses must consistently be understood underneath these multitudinous relations of

power. Their words do not represent *the* truth, but instead serve to articulate a multi-voiced negotiation of *a* truth that has been constituted by “webs of multiple representations of class, race, gender, language and social relations” (Lather, 1991, p. 118). Likewise, interviewee silences are equally important spaces for inquiry. What remains “unsaid” often represents concealed or “invalidated” knowledge, and thus comes to further articulate various relations of power.

As my own skin is “infused with meanings and markers” (Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004, p. 84), it is important that I attempt to identify what impact these meanings had on the interview process. Early on in my fieldwork, I was made grossly aware of the privilege afforded to my body. Displaced in the small town of Martinsville, IN, I entered this working class, rural, and overwhelmingly white community without knowing anyone. My access to interviewees was limited, and totally dependent upon the relationships I was able to forge in a short period of time. Engrossed in a state of hyper-self-consciousness, I often reflected upon how my outside appearance as a white male dressed in jeans, work boots, ball cap and a t-shirt did not disrupt the normalized social context. I considered this to be a position of privilege, in that my “outsider-ness” was more easily concealed than what others might face. However, at the same time I recognized this privilege as reinforcing the established status quo. In other words, (dis)placed in a town (and state) with a deep history of mistrusting “outsiders”, my own body could have easily been “‘read’ as relatively non-threatening and/or a [re]productive agent of ... regressive cultural politics” (Newman, 2010, p. 30).

And in fact, it was. Bill, a Martinsville man in his seventies, was first contacted over the telephone. Being gracious enough to invite me into his home for an interview, he

revealed afterwards that he was not feeling well and had given thought to cancelling our meeting. But he didn't, despite the pleas from his wife, because "there was just something about your [my] voice on the phone" (Field Notes). Having enjoyed our time together (in what amounted to a four hour interview), Bill clearly felt relieved in the sense that I did not disrupt his preconceived mental portrait (i.e. the person he thought me to be through our telephone conversation). But how did my voice act as a conduit through which meanings were actively inscribed? And what were those meanings? My vocal tone, pitch, accent, and vernacular all served as non-threatening and positive traits upon which Bill formulated much larger understandings of me (as was made clear through his words). And, upon meeting and seeing me for the first time, it became evident that Bill (wrongfully) assumed we shared a common experience and/or set of beliefs based upon our status as white men. I do not believe the meanings affixed to my body (and voice) were the *only* reason I gained access to Bill as an interviewee, although they certainly came to influence his decision.³⁵ However, I would argue that his misguided reading of my body shaped the course of our interview, in that he "felt safe" to express his beliefs with someone who could "relate" to, and understand his experience.

While I asked specific questions about what it meant to be a 'hoosier', I conceived of Bill's entire interview as an expression of embodied 'hoosiness' – a moniker he wore close to the heart. Oftentimes, I felt uncomfortable or offended by the things he said as it disturbed me to think about the deeper implications behind his words,

³⁵ How would my ability to gain access have changed if I spoke with a "non-North American" accent, or "non-male" voice? To be fair to Bill, I cannot say one way or the other. However, the fact that he said "there was just something about [my] voice on the phone" that he found to be appealing and worth his time, suggests that Other voices are judged and measured in relation to an already-privileged voice.

or what they meant for those marked as ‘non-hoosier’.³⁶ Nonetheless, I remained silent so as to hear and better understand Bill’s thinking, whilst remaining conscious of my own concealed role in the production of those exchanges. Vaught (2008) elaborates:

I did not brazenly misrepresent myself by falsely chiming in with an imitative racism. But I know that I was consciously manipulating an assumption of shared Whiteness and so shared racism. I know that I allowed my presence itself to serve as a tacit communication that I was safe (p. 567).

In much the same way, my silence became a political position. Knowing that my body would be inscribed with meaning and read as a symbol of power and privilege, I did nothing to speak out against this construction. Instead, I leveraged this white male privilege in hopes of illuminating the raw workings of power as they manifest in ‘hoosier’ body politics (Vaught, 2008). In so doing, it is important to remember that I also acted as a co-architect in the reproduction of that power, effecting each participant’s embodiment and reflections of ‘hoosiness’. If I were to have assumed an openly-political and confrontational stance, the ensuing dialogues would have taken a much different trajectory (one that might have been overly-defensive and counter-productive to the purpose of this research).³⁷ As well, my disagreements could have been interpreted as an enactment of power, whereby the “grandmaster of knowledge” or University educated researcher has access to “the truth” under which interview participants must formulate

³⁶ For example, Bill demonized liberal politics for threatening ‘traditional American’ values; suggested that there are “too many Gods interfering with my God”; and used the word ‘negro’ to describe the Black body on one occasion.

³⁷ Moreover, within a small-town environment where people generally knew one another, I did not want to run the risk of isolating myself and preventing future interviews by acquiring the label of “disturber”.

their responses.³⁸ All of this to say, I did not remain silent throughout meetings; nor did I read questions from a piece of paper. Instead, I approached each interview as a conversation and relied on probing questions so as to gain a deep understanding for ‘hoosier’ body politics. My own line of questioning undoubtedly came to influence the dialogic production of knowledge, but so too did my occasional silence(s).

I am not suggesting my body had a ‘fixed’ meaning that came to be uniformly understood by everyone across lines of race, gender, class, etc. However, as I was discursively constituted underneath the omnipresent force of ‘hoosiness’, my status as ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ constantly fluctuated, and oftentimes complicated or blurred these binary distinctions. After interviewing Jeremy, a white male in his mid-twenties from Columbus, IN, he expressed that I “look like a ‘hoosier’”. He then proceeded to list what I was wearing – blue jeans, an old ball cap and faded work boots – as signifying aesthetics to a ‘hoosier’ corporeality. If it wasn’t for my shirt (featuring the word Canada), he proposed that my body fit the mould of a typical ‘hoosier’. Later in this chapter, I will return to Jeremy’s comments to problematize these symbols of ‘hoosiness’ as they were contiguously read against my white, male body. But for now, I would like to focus on the contestations between my outwardly ‘hoosier’ appearance and the more concealed and contradictory Canadian and University student identities that often located me as “outsider.” In particular, how did participants come to negotiate a “dialogical self” as they were faced with my presence (and attached meanings, symbols, histories, etc.)? For Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumenchery-Luik (2004), the dialogical self is:

³⁸ Of course, my silence can also be interpreted as a tacit form of approval from “the all-knowing researcher”.

...co-constructed, guided, relational and mediated [...] The self is polyvocal in social contexts, which is to say that negotiations of identity take place through multiple mediations and within the various social, political, cultural and historical contexts. Therefore, when individuals come into contact, they communicate within an ongoing social conversation that is multi-voiced. The presumptions, knowledges, ideologies, perceptions and other mediators that impact that moment are reflective of each individual's specific vocalities as they respond from and speak to any number of positions and/or sites of identity (pp. 52-53).

Thus, it is integral that I scrutinize my own identities. When I reflect on my precarious 'outsider' status, I mean to signify more than just "being from somewhere other than Indiana." Instead, what I am referring to are those qualities, beliefs, or values that position one as antithetical or Other to the 'hoosier' body. Within Republican discourses, words such as "Canadian" or "University-educated" have largely been constructed as 'un-American' by conservative news outlets (e.g. FOX News) and far-right political pundits (e.g. Rush Limbaugh). Laced in the rhetorics of mid-twentieth century Cold War fears, terms like Marxism, communism, socialism, and fascism have often been linked to both Canada and University educators/students as a means to instill fear in "real" Americans over the impending threat to "traditional" US values. Thrown into this contestable ideological terrain, I was forced to wrestle with these parts of my identity atop the contradicting symbols of 'hoosierness' diffused throughout my visible exterior. For some interviewee's, my Canadian and University student identities posed little problem. Bill, for example, was unfamiliar with Canadian politics or its

Republicanized and obscured US connotations. Upon learning that the Conservative Party of Canada was in power, he rejoiced by exhaling a sigh of relief, clapping his hands together and saying “*alright!*”. For him, it was reassurance that I was “safe”, and obviously influenced the way he spoke to me about ‘hoosier’ bodies and Indiana’s basketball culture. But the same cannot be said for everyone. Many were suspicious that a Canadian student would have interest in ‘hoosier’ culture; let alone, go to such great lengths to study the phenomenon from abroad. Granted, these were fair questions that deserved fair answers, but interviewees could not be sure of my own politics as they came to be framed underneath “Canadian” or “academic” labels. The political implications associated with these identities are constituted as both threatening and ‘un-American’ within Republican discourses, and must therefore be problematized for their role in the production of knowledge.

What effect, then, did my Canadian-student identity have on self-governing ‘hoosier’ bodies? How candid were participants, knowing that my identity posed a critical ideological risk to their own sense of self? The answers to these questions are complicated, indeed, and belong to the minds of each individual interviewee who was asked to negotiate their relative ‘hoosiness’ before my analytical gaze. Emily, an elderly Martinsville native, was extremely reluctant to conduct an interview with me when I first proposed the idea over the phone. Whether or not her fear had to do with my literal and ideological ‘outsider’ status is a matter for debate. But after telling her she was in no way obliged to sit down and talk with me, she eventually agreed and invited me into her home. Towards the end of our conversation, I asked her a question about a racist incident in the town’s history that occurred over ten years ago, prompting her to sternly

respond: “How did I know you were going to get that?” It marked an interesting point in our conversation, in that Emily’s reading of me became evident. Disappointed that I had managed to confirm her initial fears, Emily “knew” I would ask about this politicized incident from Martinsville’s past. How she managed to come to this premonition relied solely upon the information she gathered from our initial phone conversation. It seems likely then, that Emily came to read my Canadian-academic identities as ideological warning signs that I might interpret her through a politically-charged, race-conscious and “liberal-biased” orientation that threatened her very identity. Therefore, as Emily and others sought to protect themselves from what was constructed as a potentially dangerous, Canadian-University student (i.e. “Marxist”, “Socialist”, etc.) – they had every reason to withhold, curb, and/or limit information that could lead to political contestation or disagreement.³⁹

Similarly, non-white participants also became subject to power imbalances, affecting the course of what was said or revealed in the interview process. Entries in my reflexive journal articulate the extent to which I grappled with the power ascribed to my white, male body underneath ‘hoosier’ discourses. In particular, how was this read by non-white interviewees in a culture that prescribes whiteness as the unquestioned norm? Navigating these precarious waters proved to be difficult, as my attempts to engage in critical commentary were occasionally met with uncertainty or resistance. For example, in my interview with Keith (an elderly Indianapolis black man), he expressed that racism

³⁹ While I sincerely hope my illumination of power and privilege can lead people to critically reflect upon their ‘hoosier’ identities in the 21st century, a major concern of this research stems from my role in *further perpetuating* fears concerning the ‘non-hoosier’ or ‘outsider’. Many of the people I interviewed were kind enough to let me into their homes (sometimes reluctantly) despite the ideological threat I posed. However, in many respects, my writing comes to reaffirm and justify many of their original suspicions and fears – and could lead to further entrench the continued mistrust of the ‘non-hoosier’.

still affects him today albeit “in more subtle forms” (Personal Interview). However, when I asked him to describe the ways racism continues to impact his life, he diverted attention away from the question by depicting instances of overt prejudice and discrimination from his childhood. I am privileged in that I have never experienced racism and do not know what it feels like to be discriminated against on the basis of my skin colour. For this reason, I could not reasonably expect Keith (or anyone else) to comfortably open up and share intimate details regarding problems beyond my comprehension; particularly given my status as a white male researcher whom they had just met...recording, analyzing, and judging their every claim. In effect, I had asked these people to place their politics on display – to speak about racism in a “post-racial” or colour-blind era – despite the fact that my very presence served to subvert such honesty. My body, laced with ‘hoosier’ signifiers, therefore came to symbolize a form of surveillance under which non-white participants were actively policed. As a result, participant narratives pertaining to race do not (and cannot) begin to express the totality of one’s racialized *experience* in Indiana. Rather, their words come to articulate the disciplinary power of internalized ‘hoosier’ discourses; determining and defining how they meaningfully understand and talk about race and/or racism.

Disciplining Bodies and the Construction of Neo-Conservative Hoosier Whiteness

For Foucault (1977), the concept of disciplinary power is fundamental to understanding identity formation and the relations of power constituted therein. At the level of the body, dominant discourses are actively internalized and reproduced by ‘knowing subjects’ whose aim it is to construct distinct subjectivities for both themselves and Others. According to Helstein (2007): “...Discourse governs the production of what

is to count as meaningful knowledge about a particular object. By extension, this implies that the subject (as object of the discourse) who embodies that knowledge is also produced through discourse” (p. 83). By now, I hope to have made clear the ways ‘hoosier’ discourses both historically and contemporaneously (re)produce knowledge-power for racialized, gendered, and classed bodies. But, what I have yet to explore is the process of subjectification; that is, how different bodies subject themselves (or become subjected) to these dominant knowledges and *perform* their ‘hoosier’ selves.

This embodiment of ‘hoosier’, I argue, is a performance of power. With the ubiquitous state nickname “The Hoosier State”, Indiana’s bodies are automatically thrown into regimes of power and forced to negotiate, perform, and prove their “authentic” hoosierness (i.e. citizenship) to both themselves and others. “Hoosier”, therefore, is undoubtedly a political term. Yet paradoxically, its widespread popularity has given some the wrongful impression that the word no longer carries with it any political or racialized significance. Foucault (1980) might refer to this erasure of history as the “normalization” of ‘hoosier’ body politics. As something becomes “normalized” it also becomes imbued with significant power by way of its invisibility and taken-for-grantedness. In Indiana’s case, then, citizens become “destined to a certain mode of living or dying” (Foucault, 1980, p. 94) as they are expected to unproblematically subject themselves to ‘hoosier’ discourses and live an “authentic” Indiana lifestyle.

These ‘hoosier’ discourses, however, represent a distinctly white subjectivity. That is to say, the construction of a normalized, “authentic” Indiana lifestyle has been moulded by, and for, white bodies. In Newman and Giardina’s (2008) analysis of NASCAR sporting culture and the “southernization” of America, they discuss how the

Confederate flag's symbolic value has been claimed, defined, and regulated by whiteness:

...Many NASCAR spectators, and particularly those of a hyper-Southern resolve, have constructed a spectacular phantasmagoria of “heritage, not hate” and “pride, not prejudice”; (re)mediating the meaning of the flag in the order of a dominant, Southern, White (often masculine) cultural history and silencing that history and its critics by taking ownership of the spatialized discursive formation through which such a knowledge/power dynamic is forged. This resuscitation of the Old South, or what many scholars have referred to as a cultural “revisionism” colonizes both *collective memory* and *the process of remembering* under the dominant position of White subjectivity (p. 491; italics in original).

In much the same way, the symbol of a ‘hoosier’ body has been (re)mediated in the order of Indiana’s dominant, Southern, conservative, white (and often masculine) cultural history; and ubiquitously diffused (and normalized) across political, cultural, social, historical, and commercial spheres. In turn, *all* citizens are asked to remember ‘hoosier’ in uncritical, romanticized, and depoliticized terms – providing the false illusion that this subjectivity acts as an inclusive space for everyone.

As such, those who feel excluded from this white subjectivity are marginalized in their concerns. Their critical reading is positioned as being unnecessarily adversarial to the normalized, “all-encompassing” ‘hoosier’ identity; constructing *them* as the problem rather than ‘hoosiness’ itself. These critical voices become Othered and hypervisible in opposition to the powerful, invisible ‘hoosier’ centre, and are left feeling invalidated in

how they come to see themselves and the environment around them. Correspondingly, their ‘outsider’ status reaffirms the power reserved for those on the inside (i.e. ‘hoosiers’), who simultaneously discipline themselves and police Other ‘non-hoosier’ bodies (Dei, Karumanchery & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004). For King, Leonard and Kusz (2007), this amounts to a form of veiled white power under which subjects become hierarchized, ordered, and defined in relation to dominant ideologies, sociohistorical formations, and deeply embedded power structures. Crucial to this understanding is its “veiled” or “invisible” nature:

As a marker of the Other, whiteness was able to dodge relative scrutiny as a positionality, a morally conditioned, socially informed perspective.

Instead, whiteness has long reserved the privilege of making everyone but itself visible, lest it be exposed as a position within a constellation of positions. At the same time, whiteness becomes the ubiquitous marker of all that is right because it is associated with being white (Leonardo, 2002, p. 41).

In a culture that constructs ‘hoosier’ as merely *normal*, the suggestion that whiteness plays an integral role in the formation of this identity is both threatening to the word’s discursive power and the bodies that stand to benefit therein. Nonetheless, I would like to direct my attention to the disciplinary practices embodied by racialized, gendered, and classed citizens of Indiana to understand the way ‘hoosiers’ perform their cultural identity. To rearticulate the point, this performance is a performance of power. One that (according to Foucault’s notion of “technologies of the self”) comes to be experienced by bodies, through bodies as they relate to themselves; Others; society (under which

selfhood is constituted); and the dominant processes or structures of power responsible for framing “valid” or “truthful” knowledge about the individual (Newman, 2010).

Demythologizing race-neutral claims that ‘hoosier’ no longer carries with it any politicized undertones, Indiana residents (in both interviews and casual conversations) overwhelmingly suggested otherwise. Most interesting of all was people’s usage of pronouns to describe ‘hoosier’ bodies. Every white citizen I conversed with spoke from the position of ‘hoosier’. When posed with questions regarding ‘hoosier’ behaviours or deportment, answers inevitably reflected one’s self-identification with the term, in that white bodies responded through their own experiential lens and/or subjectivity. In contrast, many of the non-white citizens I spoke with articulated a conscious or unconscious disembodiment with the moniker by referring to ‘hoosiers’ as “they” or “them”, whilst speaking from a different subjectivity other than their own. Keith was one such person:

Scott: When someone today refers to hoosier basketball, and what is hoosier basketball – what kind of image comes to people’s minds do you think?

Keith: Well, they think about backboards on barns and stuff, and oak trees – that’s what they’ve been told to believe...

Scott: Why do you think that’s the image that comes to people’s minds when...

Keith: It just is! ... Hoosiers are country boys (Personal Interview).

Keith, having spent almost his entire life living in Indiana’s biggest city (Indianapolis), did not see himself as a country boy. In fact, the portrait of his Indiana experience

radically diverged from the romanticized imagery of farmboys playing basketball on the side of a barn. Instead, his narrative reflected the harsh realities faced by black urban-dwelling families in a segregated, discriminatory, and mostly white state. Regardless, Keith's disembodiment from the 'hoosier' identity was not uncommon for many non-white participants.

Demonstrating the generational flexibility with which this theme operated, Mike (whom I began this chapter by quoting) expressed a similar dissociation with the word 'hoosier'. As a multiracial male in his mid-twenties who had grown up in a small rural community in Indiana, Mike's experience was much different from Keith's. Nevertheless, he also described the 'hoosier' experience in the third person:

Scott: Can you explain to me what the importance of high school basketball is to Indiana, or hoosiers?

Mike: It's ridiculously important. It is! They go nuts over it! (Personal Interview).

While many non-white participants came to articulate 'hoosier' bodies in the same dissociative fashion, very few articulated or critically reflected upon *why* they felt so uncomfortable identifying with, or appropriating the term for themselves.⁴⁰ Mike, however, was a notable exception. I began this chapter with his words, writing: "Yeah, if I was talking to someone who was out of state or I went to another state, I'd say 'Oh yeah, I'm a hoosier.' But talking to other people from Indiana I never use the term" (Personal Interview). For Mike, the identity had been claimed inside Indiana's borders by

⁴⁰ This leads me to believe that many unconsciously dissociate with the term, but have accepted its normalized status on the surface.

those he referred to as “purebred good ol’ boys [that] tend to lean Southern...if you know what I mean” (Personal Interview), and thus made him uncomfortable.

The Southern roots of Indiana’s ‘hoosier’ identity run deep, as I hope to have outlined so far. However, Mike’s imagery of a white, male, and Southern ‘hoosier’ body are as much rooted in his personal experiences as they are in history. He recalled instances throughout his life where he has been subjected to the symbolic power of the Confederate flag. Dating back to junior high school, he still remembers “these huge six foot flags that they would attach to poles and ... run around the track while we were playing football games” (Personal Interview). Today, he continues to see the appropriation of southern symbols in the form of the Confederate flag or slogans such as “the south will rise again” or “don’t tread on me”. That is not to say Indiana’s spatialized landscape is completely overrun by these symbols of oppression (I did not bear witness to the flag during my time spent in Martinsville, IN or Indianapolis, IN); however, it does suggest a type of identity politics that coincidentally align with ‘hoosier’ bodies. In other words, if those who proudly call themselves ‘hoosiers’ are the same people to boastfully appropriate symbols of the old south, Mike felt more than uncomfortable and unwelcome to align his identity with ‘hoosiness’ inside Indiana. Newman and Giardina (2008) further elaborate upon the meaning of “the south” today, writing:

It symbolizes and represents the confluence of a romanticized history of White privilege and a localized (re)mediation of (neo)conservatism. These re-articulations of an imaginary “South” resurrect the “mystic chords” of a collective memory, a new “Southern-ness” that is constituted by a *mélange*

of time (new identities and old power structures) and space (local subjectivity and global plurality) (p. 482).

Therefore, the appropriation of southern symbols by people whom proudly declare themselves ‘hoosiers’, suggests an important ideological commensurability between ‘hoosiness’ and ‘southernness’. On one level, the ‘hoosier’ identity is inextricably linked to the south through a carefully regulated history (i.e. early, white, rustic *and Southern* settlers as the ‘authentic embodiment of hoosiness’), producing a romanticized type of Southern ‘hoosier’ eth(n)ic (Newman, 2010). But on a much deeper level, both ‘the south’ and ‘the hoosier’ derive their contemporary significance from a shared set of neo-Conservative identity politics, whereby the power and privilege of white male patriarchy (constructed as “traditional” beliefs and values) becomes actively defended and diffused at the level of the body.

This complex dialectical landscape plays a fundamental role in shaping the way ‘hoosiers’ come to understand their cultural identity. I spent considerable time asking people in Martinsville, IN what it meant to be a ‘hoosier’, and was not surprised to hear many confer upon southernized, neo-Conservative narratives to construct their own body. One such example is illustrated through the oft-mentioned notion of “hoosier hospitality.” Deriving its meaning from the more familiar southern tradition known as “southern hospitality”, many of Martinsville’s citizens spoke to the significance of ‘hoosier hospitality’ in differentiating their own ‘hoosier’ body from those marked as ‘non-hoosier’. Megan, a married white female in her late twenties, elaborated on this concept in our interview:

Hoosier hospitality – I mean, that’s one thing we are known [for]. The further south you go, the nicer people are ... If you would go to New York or even Chicago – it’s very quick paced; people are in a rush; they don’t take the time. But in Indiana people tend to take a minute to sit down and talk to you about anything (Personal Interview).

Speaking from a position of white privilege, Megan paints a romanticized picture of the south whereupon everyone is treated “nicer”. She ignores the fact that for those who are not white or heterosexual, many parts of the south represent danger and/or overt forms of discrimination. Moreover, she calls upon the Other – in this case, metropolitan centres – to act as a threatening menace to the moral fabric and decency upon which southern (and Indianan) lifestyles rest. The notion that Indiana is somehow “nicer” than other states or cities is severely misguided, to say the least. However, as this narrative becomes recognized for its politicized meaning, the underlying message is clear. Indiana, like many rural and conservative southern states, finds itself standing up for the lifestyle and beliefs of a “true” or “authentic” Americana. Constructed as protecting “traditional” US values from the dangerous threat of globalizing, corporatizing, multicultural experiments (located in the America’s biggest cities), ‘hoosier hospitality’ takes on a distinctly conservative and racialized tone. It might also be one rooted in male patriarchy, considering Martinsville’s women were far more likely to understand their ‘hoosier’ identity through the notion of ‘hoosier hospitality’ than their male counterparts. Whose responsibility, therefore, is it to “be nice”? If indeed, the onus primarily falls upon the shoulders of ‘hoosier’ women, then how does this reproduce gender roles (i.e. the submissive female) and/or reinforce male patriarchy?

Providing further evidence into the neo-Conservative undertakings of ‘hoosier’ body politics, Henry (white male in his sixties), Bill (white male in his seventies), and Dave (white male in his early thirties) each seemed to discipline themselves accordingly:

Henry: I think it [being hoosier] has something to do with small to medium sized communities; Christian values; nuclear family upbringing; hard work; discipline; patriotism – loving your state, loving your nation; some pride...pride in what you are, what your state is (Personal Interview).

Bill: I believe the work ethic; the worship ethic; the family values that for years were typical of our hoosier people. People, who not unlike Coach Wooden’s father who was a farmer, raised hogs, a man of the soil. I relate to those values...My belief in my God; my love of the country; and appreciation for my wife and family (Personal Interview).

Dave: [Hoosier] probably traces back to kind of that frontier, woodsy-mindset...I would say – hard working. I think most people would identify a certain work ethic (Personal Interview).

Some of the common threads to emerge from these responses undoubtedly fall in line with Conservative ideologies (the value of hard work; patriotism; nuclear family; Christian morality). But most important of all are the bodies that come to internalize and reproduce these meanings. Giving the impression of uniformity and/or consensual agreement, these dominant constructions of (a white, male) ‘hoosier’ act as the measure of scale upon which *all* Indiana citizens remain subject. Speaking from this white male subjectivity (without recognizing it as such), Henry, Bill and Dave see themselves as

embodying a legitimate or authentic ‘hoosier’ identity, and are reaffirmed in this belief by way of ‘hoosier’ discourses.

Thus, through the relations between self and Others, an overwhelming percentage of white males who discipline their ‘hoosier’ bodies accordingly come to diffuse this power in the social sphere. The most commonly cited experience for non-white interviewees was being asked “where are you from” on the basis of the colour of their skin. Mike describes:

But, I’ve been asked that question so many times of “what are you”,
“where are you from” – and they try to be coy about it. Like, when they
say “where are you from?” – and I say I’m from Milan⁴¹ and they’re like
“Yeah, but where are you from really?” meaning that I’m obviously some
immigrant or from somewhere else (Personal Interview).

Mike’s experience begins to elucidate how whiteness operates invisibly as part of the ‘hoosier’ identity, while non-white people are marked as hypervisible in their Othered, non-hoosier bodies. Mike was not alone in this experience, which suggests the implicit assumption that “real hoosiers” are white – and to be Other is to be less-than (Dei, Karumanchery and Karumanchery-Luik, 2004). Moreover, racialized females are brought under extra scrutiny by policing (male) white bodies. After our interview, Angela (an elderly black woman from Gary, IN and now living in Indianapolis, IN) described her recent experiences walking into small town gymnasiums to watch high school basketball games as the only non-white person in attendance. Making mention of the powerful normalizing “gaze” performed by white bodies in the stands (many of whom were men) she felt their eyes centre in on her presence. Marked as the sexualized, exoticized, or

⁴¹ The name of the town has been changed to protect Mike’s identity.

dangerous Other in this context, Angela recalled her heightened state of self-awareness underneath the penetrating stares of onlookers...leading her to police her body accordingly.

In fact, Indiana's basketball culture – as I will argue in the forthcoming pages (chapter five) – is an absolutely essential space for critique if one hopes to interrogate 'hoosier' and 'non-hoosier' bodies of the twenty-first century. Angela's experience only begins to mark the degree to which political narratives emerge from the hardwood. As the majority of people I spoke with confirmed, the word 'hoosier' has become synonymous with the sport of basketball today. Chapter five, therefore, will explore the pedagogical role of basketball in the creation of a 'hoosier' body politic.

First to summarize chapter four, 'hoosier' body politics remain inextricably bound to racialized understandings of the self and Others, which continue to influence people's experiences today. In both historical and contemporary discourses, 'hoosier' seeks to maintain, regulate, and normalize a white, working-class, Conservative, patriarchal, and Christian polity as the authentic representation of "real" Indiana citizenship. Of course, the current era of colour-blindness has significantly worked to depoliticize these undertones and present what amounts to a deceptively neutral, universal, and all-encompassing 'hoosier' identity. The issue however, is that those who fall outside the markers of this invisible centre continue to experience themselves as Other or "less-than" in their own bodies. The identity has thus been claimed, (re)produced and embodied by an overwhelmingly white majority who actively manipulates the knowledge-power relations of 'hoosiness' through which people understand their own bodies as 'insiders' or 'outsiders'.

Chapter 5: Performing Hoosier Whiteness and the Pedagogical Function of Basketball

In both academic (Abdel-Shehid, 2005; Anderson, 1991; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Newman, 2010; Sack & Suster, 2000; Whitson & Gruneau, 2006; Wilson, 1994) and non-academic (Foer, 2004; Kuper, 2006; Paolantonio, 2008) circles, sport and its relationship to the nation-state has been a popular subject of critical attention. While it is true that sports come to act as “inscriptive space[s] in which ideas about nationhood can be recorded” (Wilson, 1994, p. 266), it is important to remember that claims of an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) are merely just that – imagined. Moreover, as Bruce Kidd rightfully acknowledges, sport does not have an essentialized role in societies, but rather maintains “a plurality of forms that have different results in different contexts” (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group Secretariat, 2007, p. 165). Thus, attempts to erase this plurality through the inscription of a monolithic, imagined “national portrait/identity/essence” represent an enactment of power on two fronts: 1) one’s experience of sport becomes an experience of his/her place in the nation-state; and 2) one’s relative position in the nation-state is mediated through a complex set of discourses which seek to define “true” or “authentic” citizenship. Those bodies falling outside the homogenized centre are marked Other and ‘less-than’, and thereby come to know/experience themselves as such in the broader sociopolitical sphere.

These relations of power tend to peak the interests of many critical scholars studying the intersection of sport and the nation-state. As sport and nation (both socially constructed concepts) become claimed and injected with dominant meanings, we might ask ourselves who are the inscribers? Who is meant to benefit from these knowledges

(alternatively, who is not meant to benefit, or is positioned as ‘outside’)? And from where – or how – do these narratives derive their legitimacy?

In what follows, I rely upon the thinking of Abdel-Shehid (2005) to understand the relationship between Indiana’s basketball culture and the ‘hoosier’ state identity. To borrow an important quote:

The fact that nations and sporting cultures are structurally homologous is crucial to understanding the ready co-existence between nations and sporting cultures...Both structures, by virtue of their overdetermining and repressive demand for sameness, are troubled or ‘haunted’ by the reality and complexity of social difference. As such, nations and sporting cultures by and large act as repressive or normalizing structures that, by virtue of an inability to tolerate discord, constantly attempt to produce conformity and sameness, and disavow difference and inequality (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p. 3).

In chapter four, I hope to have illustrated ‘hoosier’ as being more than a word, but rather a social and political force under which individuals come to learn and negotiate their Indiana identities. As evidenced through public policy decisions (e.g. S.B. 590 and the attack on illegal ‘non-hoosier’ bodies) and one’s own identity politics (e.g. participant interviews), the neo-Conservative underpinnings of ‘hoosier’ represent a *real* threat to social difference. By “real”, what I mean to say is that attempts to create sameness are articulated and experienced through the body; affording white, masculine, middle class, and ruralized men with *real* political, cultural, and psychological advantages for meeting that “sameness”. Similarly, in this chapter I argue that Indiana’s basketball culture also

serves a normalizing purpose (tracing back to the sport's roots). Its rigid structure and deeply institutionalized 'rules' ensures that docile bodies⁴² strive to meet, perform, and legitimize themselves as 'hoosiers' (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Contrastingly, those who do not meet the requirements are left with the unfortunate label of Other, and are subject to the meanings inscribed therein.

Writing what is "popularly"⁴³ known as one of the authoritative books on Indiana's basketball obsession, author Phillip Hoose (1995) claims: "...a Hoosier is one who is drawn toward the home gym or the playground and the month of March like the tides to a full moon." (p. xiv). Gary, a middle-class, middle-aged white male claimed "...when you say hoosier the very first thing that comes into my mind is basketball" (Personal Interview). Similarly, Lisa (a middle-class, middle-aged black female) agreed: "You know, what comes to mind is that a hoosier relates to basketball. When you hear the name hoosier, you naturally think of 'that's that basketball state where people are crazy about basketball'" (Personal Interview). Countless other interviewees, people whom I spoke to casually on the street or in restaurants, authors, and representations in popular culture⁴⁴ confirm these opinions. Firmly embedded in the public consciousness seems to be the notion that 'hoosier' is basketball – and basketball is 'hoosier'.

Memory and the Imagined Community

In their analysis of hockey culture and a 'Canadian' identity, Gruneau and Whitson (1993) suggest that these types of readings are mythologized. In other words,

⁴² Foucault (1977) conceived of docile bodies as those that subject themselves to dominant discourses and engage in practices that demonstrate as much.

⁴³ I use the word "popularly" as a way to articulate the book's recognition amongst many Indiana citizens (at least, those I spoke to).

⁴⁴ For example, the 1986 basketball film *Hoosiers* made the link between Indiana's identity and the basketball culture clear. *Hoosiers* will be critically analysed in later sections of this chapter.

‘Canadianness’ does not mean hockey and hockey does not mean ‘Canadianness’ regardless of how persuasive these rhetorics are. Instead, what can be gleaned from these narratives are an important set of power dynamics, whereby ‘Canadianness’ and ‘hockey’ come to be remembered and romantically packaged at the expense of marginalized or forgotten “alternative” realities. These myths, as Gruneau and Whitson (1993) assert, typically come to symbolize a nation-state’s cultural values and subsequently appeal to the emotions of a national people (many of whom long for an “imagined community”). However, in order to successfully do so, subjects are typically asked to remember a depoliticized social history. That way, “Other” potentially damaging and/or contradictory realities cannot jeopardize the symbolic cultural value that is affixed to the dominant myth.

Therefore, memory is inherently political. Writing about what he describes as the embodiment of “Dixie South” whiteness, Newman (2010) makes the politics of memory clear. He argues: “Through remembering (and forgetting) we selectively mobilize the past, linking historical events while separating others; privileging select individuals, events, and narratives and marginalizing or erasing others” (p. 71). In other words, the way one chooses to memorialize history is always rooted in the politics of the present. Dominant positionalities are subsequently “brought to life” (p. 71) by way of their ability to claim and produce preferred readings of an imagined community. The voices of those who feel excluded from this imagined community are encouraged to uncritically accept its narrative, whilst those who do not are silenced and/or marked outside its homogenized centre. Focusing his attention on the memorialization of the U.S. Civil War, Newman (2010) demonstrates this point by elucidating the “Lost Cause” as a deracialized concept

that lives in the Southern white imaginary. As he explains, the “lost cause” is contemporaneously remembered by many white, neo-Conservative, Southern (often male) bodies by reconstructing what the ‘cause’ meant. The ensuing result is one that ignores the racialized politics embedded within U.S. Civil War histories (and symbols of the Confederacy); instead opting to sentimentalize the South’s position as fighting for “state’s rights”.

Although many Southern white bodies choose to remember the Old South underneath these obscured logics (they do, after all, benefit from them), non-white counterparts are not afforded with the same luxury. Rather, to become recognized as a real southern body requires that marginalized voices lose their memory of an oppressive and racist past. Abdel-Shehid (2005) expounds on this point within the context of a “Canadian” identity: “For immigrants, adopting a Canadian identity is contingent upon a loss of memory and a denial of history. Loss of memory, or forgetting, is crucial to the repressive and normalizing processes of making insiders and outsiders” (p. 5). Thus, one is expected to unproblematically renounce their own diasporic histories so as to legitimately embody more “acceptable” or “authentic” forms of citizenship. To discipline one’s body according to the dominant discourse of “real Canadian”, “real Southerner” or “real hoosier” therefore requires conformity that does not take well to social difference. Additionally, these attempts to create sameness are consistently moulded through the eyes of a dominant subjectivity. Appropriately then, one must problematize the deeper meanings or implications behind such constructions, as they act as potential sites for the reproduction of hegemonic forms of power. Newman’s (2010) research is once again helpful in explaining this viewpoint, as he characterizes the rearticulation of a

deracialized Dixie South whiteness as an expression of “new logics [for an] old racial hierarchy” (p. 182). Or, strictly speaking, a contemporary “twist” of words aimed at reviving racial hierarchies from the past – so as to ideologically benefit from them in the present.

Evidence would suggest that a similar process is at work in Indiana; one that becomes most evident through a critical examination of the state’s basketball culture. It is by no coincidence that many Indiana citizens look to this sport to understand more about their ‘hoosier’ selves, as mythologized notions concerning ‘hoosierness’ and basketball have been in circulation for quite some time. However, as many of the aforementioned critical scholars have been quick to point out, the espousal of an imagined ‘hoosier’ community is far from being the galvanizing, idealistic space that it is made out to be. In fact, as basketball and ‘hoosierness’ concatenate to produce meaningful subjectivities, one begins to understand its normalizing effects on the bodies constituted therein. Emerging from a racist past *under which the sport came to derive its symbolic and cultural value* (Martin, 1998; Paino, 2001; Pierce, 2000), basketball has been memorialized according to the ‘hoosier’ (i.e. white, neo-Conservative, and working class male) subjectivity. As such, Indiana basketball’s histories have been selectively mobilized to assist in the production of a depoliticized imaginary ‘hoosier’ community. Those who were historically left “outside” this community (based on discriminatory and segregated racial politics) continue to experience themselves as outsider (i.e. ‘non-hoosier’), as these new logics of an old racial hierarchy (Newman, 2010) encourage one to forget his/her memory and conform to the established, privileged reading set forth by ‘hoosiers’.

‘Hoosier Basketball’ and the Struggle Between History and Memory

I use the term ‘hoosier basketball’ to convey Indiana’s sporting tradition, as it reminds us that each of these cultural symbols (i.e. ‘hoosier’ and basketball) simultaneously inform and become informed by the logics of the other. To begin, it is useful to distinguish history and memory as fundamentally opposed terms (Nora, 1989). Although ‘hoosier basketball’ has been widely broached by non-academic authors⁴⁵, academic scholars have failed to keep pace with this growing body of popular literature. In turn, Indiana’s basketball culture has largely managed to escape criticism whilst enjoying the romanticized narratives (re)produced by independent writers. In many ways, this division in scholarship comes to epitomize Nora’s (1989) distinction between history and memory: “Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it...History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis and criticism” (p. 8-9).⁴⁶ To date, an extremely limited number of scholars have attempted to offer critical insight into the cultural significance of Indiana basketball (Briley, 2005; Martin, 1998; Paino, 2001; Pierce, 2000). Nonetheless, their respective contributions are important to our understanding of the sport, in that they represent a small but much needed ‘historical’ voice to offset the romanticized narratives of a much larger body of ‘memorializing’ literature.

⁴⁵ To give an impression for the body of non-academic literature on ‘hoosier basketball’, I stood before at least four or five shelves in an Indianapolis library which featured books written about this topic.

⁴⁶ One needs to exert caution in the polarization of these two concepts as they come to be labeled underneath the words ‘memory’ and ‘history’. For example, late historian Herb Schwomeyer (a white male, born and raised in Indiana) has written extensively on the topic of Indiana basketball, but avoids any type of critical analysis in fear of being perceived as “biased”. Speaking to future researchers of Indiana girls’ basketball, he pleads: “There must be a constant re-evaluation by responsible persons who look at the total program in an objective and honest manner, then report their findings in a candid, but unemotional and impersonal presentation.” (Schwomeyer, 1985, p. 53). Reflected in his writing, this type of “history” falls short from any real analysis or criticism. Instead, Schwomeyer proves himself to fall closer in line with Nora’s (1989) conception of memory. Despite his claims to objectivity, his words represent an invisible ‘hoosier’ bias or subjectivity under which he comes to understand and construct histories pertaining to ‘hoosier basketball’.

It is easy to see why this historical voice has become so marginalized in recent years. Rather than simply acknowledge racism as having “once existed” as part of Indiana basketball’s history, each of these historians argue that race and racism played a fundamental role in affording the sporting culture with its meaning and significance. In other words, Indiana’s disproportionately rural, Southern, white and Conservative populace of the early twentieth century used basketball as a cultural outlet to articulate a set of racialized (what I argue, ‘hoosier’) identity politics. Both Martin (1998) and Paino (2001) make this point abundantly clear by referencing Indiana’s enormously high KKK membership. Throughout the 1920s, the KKK enjoyed unprecedented success in Indiana – eventually overtaking the state government underneath the leadership of D.C. Stephenson. And while this official state polity did not last, the ideological remnants of the Klan pervaded into all aspects of life and continued to influence people’s thinking well into the twentieth century. Preaching a crisis of community, much of the Klan’s ideological success can be attributed to the promise of “moral renewal” at a time when worried, Southern-born ‘hoosiers’ were convinced that “traditional” community values were being threatened by the rapidly changing, industrializing, and increasingly foreign-born world around them (Martin, 1998; Paino, 2001). Casting these foreign bodies/influences as ‘outside’ or antithetical to the KKK’s vision of community thus served to inscribe (exclusively white) ‘hoosier’ communities with their meaning. And as Martin (1998) describes, high school basketball (and its increasing popularity amidst a racialized backdrop) became a cultural outlet through which these narratives could unfold:

In order for a community of “us” to really signify anything – to have a gut-level meaning for those who seek to experience it – there must be a “them” in opposition to which the community can define itself. Both basketball and the Klan spoke to this need. Intense rivalry with the teams of neighboring towns was indubitably a far less invidious manifestation of the urge to find self-definition through defining “the other” than the explicitly white, Protestant, nativist bigotry through which the Klan sought to define community, but the attractiveness of both were rooted in the same impulse to create a sense of inclusion precisely by excluding “the other” (p. 141).

In fact, as basketball became a powerful cultural institution for ‘hoosiers’ to understand *their* community, appropriate measures were introduced to preserve this sporting culture as a sacrosanct space of whiteness. Commissioner of the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA), Arthur Trester, subsequently barred all-black schools from participating in the tournament between the years 1927-1942 (Paino, 2001).⁴⁷

As contemporary mythologizations of ‘hoosier basketball’ move along this dialectic of an imagined community, old racial hierarchies from Indiana’s past are brought into the present underneath “new logics” (Newman, 2010). That is to say, it is clear that today’s imagined ‘hoosier’ community is one that still continues to be rooted in the exclusion of Others; however, a “new interpretation” of this history sets out to mask these racialized politics and maintain an invisible power (i.e. whiteness). The ensuing romanticization of Indiana basketball histories (despite warnings from historians) comes

⁴⁷ Black players could still play on “integrated” teams but were often subject to invidious treatment by opposing teams and fans alike (Paino, 2001).

to represent Nora's (1989) understanding of 'memory'. And according to Giroux (1997) we should not be surprised, as he posits that: "[a] new cartography of race has emerged as the result of an attempt to rewrite the racial legacy of the past, while recovering a mythic vision of Whiteness associated with purity and innocence" (pp. 287-288).

For 'hoosiers' seeking to understand and construct their cultural identity, basketball serves an important role in fostering an idealized and overly-sentimental memorialized space of whiteness. Not one recorded or unrecorded interviewee even suggested that race play a role (historically or contemporaneously) in making basketball special to 'hoosiers' (thereby demonstrating the extent to which knowledge-power marginalizes and silences the aforementioned voices of critical historians). Instead, depoliticized and more functional explanations were commonly espoused (or, what Gruneau and Whitson (1993) might refer to as naturalization). Dave figured "there's probably certain logistics about basketball that lend itself to this part of the country. Like, basketball equipment is usually made from wood and there is plenty of wood here" (Personal Interview). A more commonly articulated narrative from participants was that basketball is an indoor sport, and therefore appealed/appeals to 'hoosiers' in the cold winter months since there was/is no other activities to partake in. In contrast to the aforementioned works of historical scholarship, non-academic literature tends to rely upon these sorts of depoliticized, naturalized narratives to make sense of basketball's popularity in the state. And, while I would like to refrain from proclaiming these explanations as "wrong", they do not (on their own) begin to explain 'hoosier basketball's' surging popularity throughout much of the twentieth century (nor do racialized explanations, for that matter). However, to exclude deeper social and political

interpretations altogether is to assume a position of privilege, in that one is *able* or *allowed* to forget the harsh realities and experiences of Others who were left outside the imagined community. Similarly, non-white people's experiences and understandings of 'hoosier basketball' are re-defined according to whiteness, as they are similarly asked to "erase" or "forget" their own memories in favour of the dominant cultural narrative. Those who resist not only resist this reinterpretation of basketball – but also, more fundamentally their 'hoosier' identity.

Representing, Negotiating, and Understanding Racism in the 'Hoosier' Memory

As noted, the memory of Indiana basketball tends to explain the sport's popularity through depoliticized, functional or natural terms. And, while many of these explanations might have an air of truth, they fail to address much deeper questions surrounding basketball's symbolic and racialized significance. That is not to suggest racial politics of the past are completely erased from one's memory; only that their contemporary construction and understanding seems to have little meaning for those who formulate an identity around 'hoosiness' and basketball. In turn, I would like to examine the dominant narrative espoused by cultural intermediaries to negotiate and represent an "uncomfortable" sporting history,⁴⁸ and specifically focus on the way Indiana citizens come to internalize and learn about basketball and their 'hoosier' selves through such knowledge.

In 1955, the first all-black institution won the IHSAA boy's state tournament (Crispus Attucks High School, located in Indianapolis, IN). Having been denied the opportunity to compete up to 1942, it marked an important year in the history of

⁴⁸ What I mean by "uncomfortable" is that Indiana basketball's racial politics pose a threat to the romanticized remembrance of the sport. As the sport is inextricably bound to the 'hoosier' identity, this danger comes to effect more than just basketball itself.

Indiana's basketball tradition. Moreover, Indianapolis's black community perceived the victory to be a significant political triumph in their fight for equality (Pierce, 2000).

Today, Crispus Attucks's victory continues to be remembered through a politicized lens, in that it marks the *end* of a political history.⁴⁹ In other words, Crispus Attucks's 1955 victory is contemporaneously memorialized to celebrate the beginnings of a post-racial era in Indiana basketball. For critical race theorists, this logic comes to epitomize a white epistemology:

White epistemology can be characterized as fragmentary and fleeting because white livelihood depends on this double helix. It is fragmentary because in order for whiteness to maintain its invisibility, or its unmarked status, it must by necessity mistake the world as non-relational or partitioned (Leonardo, 2002, p. 40).

This white epistemology constructs Indiana's racist basketball environment as having occurred long ago or "in the past", but does not attempt to understand this history as a legacy that continued/continues to influence the sporting culture post-1955 (Leonardo, 2002). Demonstrating the hegemonic force with which this epistemological orientation exerts itself, Keith, a black Indianapolis man who played on the 1955 Crispus Attucks team, envisioned his team as having triumphed over and rectified Indiana's racist sporting culture:

Scott: How do you see it [racism] filter into the basketball court?

⁴⁹ For instance, in the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, Crispus Attucks is framed as the first all-black school to win a state championship. Based upon what I could see, the topic of racism is never mentioned again in any other exhibits (before or after 1955). Many books written on Indiana basketball take a similar approach to memorializing the story.

Keith: Well, sports it don't really go...it's not into sport. It doesn't exist in sports I don't think, unless it's on a personal thing with the coach – where they don't like the personal guy. Because I tell you what – about us winning everything...man, they started making guys go to other schools man. Start saying “you live in this county, you gotta go over here – you gotta go to that city” – they wanted some of them black players man (Personal Interview).

Keith's commentary is interesting for a number of reasons. Certainly following the 1955 high school season, black students from Indiana's cities were seen as potential commodities (rather than students) in an extremely profitable high school basketball system. For that reason, many schools did in fact begin to recruit black players from the city – and some still do.⁵⁰ I was able to attend a game featuring one of the schools accused of partaking in this recruitment process, and first noticed how the all-black roster of high school students was coached by five middle-aged to elderly white men. Recognizing that my perspective rooted in critical race theory and leftist politics contributed to my disgruntled reading, it is striking to compare the difference between my interpretation and Keith's. While the image of white, male power figures traveling into cities to observe the Other with the intent of luring him somewhere else is unsettling from my orientation (e.g. the student becomes framed as an “athlete” who can benefit from a “top tier program” rather than a student who can benefit from a top tier school; the

⁵⁰ There are two different ways of looking at claims of illegal recruitment. One way is to suggest that the allegations being made by largely (white) non-Indianapolis communities have little merit, and instead represent a racialized attack on “city schools” for ruining the “moral purity” of the game. The other way is to take seriously the claims of illegal recruiting. Given the profits to be made, reputations at stake, jobs on the line, etc. within high school basketball, it would come as no surprise to learn that schools/coaches/administrators have engaged in this practice so as to benefit themselves and/or their school. Perhaps, then, it is best that we not see these positions as mutually exclusive, and instead proceed forth with the understanding that they can each work simultaneously.

racialized dichotomization of coaching as mental, and competing as physical; colonialist narratives of white fascination with the exoticized and physicalized black body); Keith saw this as a sign of progress. I cannot claim to wholly understand Keith's experience. He grew up as a black man, in a segregated era, facing overt discrimination in a notoriously racist state. And, while this undoubtedly comes to influence the way he understands racism, he is also a product of Indiana's basketball culture, 'hoosier' discourses, and the neoliberal agenda of colour-blindness.

Perhaps then, Keith's words are limited in their ability to reveal his understanding of racism because they articulate something much deeper – that is, a colour-blind discursive landscape under which Indiana basketball is read.⁵¹ During our interview, Keith revealed that racism “still exists now” and is carried out “in more subtle ways” (Personal Interview), suggesting that he is open to the idea of covert, institutionalized and/or systemic expressions of racism. Yet upon switching the conversation to sport, Keith no longer felt as though these rules applied. Abdel-Shehid (2005) describes this phenomenon as the common-sense view of sport, whereby sport is imagined to occupy a mythical space disjointed from the corrupting influences of power and politics. Furthermore, underneath this popularized logic, he argues that sports are confined to “the *physical* realm, separate from the presumably *mental* world of politics and culture. This conception of sport makes it difficult to discuss ‘social problems’ in sports except as external or aberrant, and not in an ongoing or systematic fashion” (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p. 47; italics in original).

⁵¹ Here, I recognize the relations of power and racialized politics that are being enacted through my interpretation of Keith's words. I am not (as the all-knowing, white, University researcher) trying to “write over” Keith. In fact, following in line with critical race theory I advocate that we listen closely to Keith's voice. However, through this listening, I believe we can hear inherent contradictions that require deeper analysis.

However, if one brings politics into the equation, a new reading emerges with regards to Keith's original point. As was noted in chapter four, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision did little to desegregate schools. As public institutions continued to uphold an informal policy of segregation, appropriate measures were taken to promote an actualized form of racial integration. Culminating in the 1976 decision *United States v. Board of School Commissioners*, black Indianapolis students within selected neighborhoods were bused to suburban township school districts (as opposed to those from the predominantly white township being transported into Indianapolis). As Reynolds (1998) explains, the racial politics were palpable: "Many Indianapolis blacks resented being discriminatorily burdened with correcting a wrong they did not cause. However, massive resistance by suburban whites was probably avoided by not ordering their children into IPS [Indianapolis Public Schools] schools" (p. 187). Consequently, the recruitment of Indianapolis black students from the city to white rural and suburban schools was not merely an expression of white acceptance of black athletes (as Keith asserts). Instead, Indiana's complex history of racial politics continued to influence these decisions.

To provide further evidence for my argument that the 1955 Crispus Attucks team serves an important role in separating racialized politics from the 'hoosier' memory, I would like to also call upon some important exchanges with an interviewee named Henry. Asking him whether Indiana basketball continues to derive any significance from its racialized past, he responded by saying:

Henry: But then you had Indianapolis Attucks come along...

Scott: Yeah, 55/56.

Henry: Oscar Robertson kind of changed all of that. It took a while
(Personal Interview).

In this exchange, Henry constructs Oscar Robertson (Crispus Attucks's best player, who would eventually go on to lead a successful career in college and the NBA) as a sort of Jackie Robinson figure. That is to say, each player (mythologized in their respective leagues/sports) serves a political function to those who wish to argue that racism in sport no longer exists. However, Oscar Robertson has, to this day remained outspoken in his critique of Indiana basketball culture and the racism embedded therein (even after his team's victory in 1955) (Roberts, 1999; Robertson, 2003). Mentioning this to Henry, he responded by saying: "Yeahhhh...there's some leftover – there is bound to be some bitterness for how people were treated. And I don't know what all they had to go through in those days. And certainly yeah – mistreatment would linger with you" (Personal Interview).

Strikingly then, Oscar Robertson's contemporary critiques of 'hoosier basketball' are marginalized and degraded to "bitterness" or "leftover" resentment by a 'hoosier' populace trained to memorialize Indiana's basketball landscape as *once having* a racist past. Oscar's political significance is thus defined and "stuck" in 1955 according to the 'hoosier' memory. He cannot offer a "valid" or "fair" critique of 'hoosier basketball' today because of the "lingering" effects of mistreatment that continue to "cloud" his judgment. Other 'Othered' voices who wish to speak out against injustices are similarly subject to this panoptic gaze,⁵² and encouraged to police their criticism accordingly. For

⁵² Foucault (1977), borrowing from the work of Jeremy Bentham, used the notion of the panopticon to explain the way power is internalized and regulated by individuals who essentially police themselves. The panopticon is a concept whereby prisoners are subject to the omnipresent surveilling gaze of a single guard located in the centre of a circular room who is able to see every prison cell from his standpoint. Though the

example, as Keith mentioned earlier, racism could only exist in Indiana's basketball environment if "it's on a personal thing with the coach – where they don't like the personal guy" (Personal Interview). This thinking, according to Robbins (2004), is symptomatic of today's conservative ethos whereby "racism is reduced to a consequence of ... personal 'taste' and, consequently, is displaced entirely from the realm of history, cultural practices, and social relations of power" (p. 2). Embedded in this logic is the presupposition that racism no longer exists as part of 'hoosier basketball'. And, to ensure the continuance of this belief not only requires that 'hoosiers' actively regulate (e.g. marginalizing critical voices as "leftover bitterness"), but also necessitates the need to conceal whiteness through the persistent romanticization of history. In other words, race and basketball are consistently negotiated, understood, and mediated through the hypervisible Other – or, those who "have a race" and are affected by racism (e.g. the 1955 Crispus Attucks Tigers). But, if one truly wants to understand race, racism and Indiana's basketball culture, he/she must critically interrogate the invisible centre (i.e. whiteness) under which the politics of race become far more complex. In that respect, I argue that we begin to direct a critical gaze towards the 1954 high school basketball season and its romanticized place in the memory of 'hoosier basketball'.

Memorializing/Romanticizing 1954 and the Concealment of "Hoosier Whiteness"

There is perhaps no greater example of the romanticization and revision of Indiana's racist legacy than the 1954 high school basketball season, simply known to 'hoosiers' as the "Milan Miracle." It is a story that nearly every Indiana child grows up hearing at least once – a representation of what Indiana basketball "used to be". As the

guard may or may not be watching a particular cellmate at any given time, the potential for him/her to do so *always* exists. Prisoners are therefore encouraged to adopt the gaze of the guard at all times and police themselves accordingly.

small, all-white rural school from Milan, IN comes to epitomize a type of purity upon which the game once stood for, the reader is lulled into a socially and historically unconscious remembering of that moment in time (during the same year, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is made; Indiana remains extremely segregated in towns, cities, workplaces, schools, etc.; black populations continue to be harassed and discriminated against by their white counterparts in their everyday lives). Situated in this tense racial climate, Milan's victory was not merely a depoliticized celebration of David beating Goliath (as hegemonic constructions/understandings suggest). Instead, the whiteness of Milan undoubtedly played an important factor in the historical (and contemporary) meanings associated to their victory.

After barring all-black schools from participating in the state tournament for almost the entire first half of the twentieth century, the sudden presence of black bodies represented an encroachment upon an established (white) sporting culture that had long been claimed as such (Paino, 2001). Basketball was, after all, a 'hoosier' practice; and racialized 'non-hoosiers' had been marked beyond this symbolic territory for a reason (i.e. to afford those inside the cultural realm with an understanding for their 'insider' status). Resenting the newfound rights afforded to Indiana's all-black institutions, many 'hoosiers' articulated a type of moral panic – fearing that the values and cultural significance upon which *their* sporting tradition was built would suddenly become compromised in light of the significant presence of black bodies (Paino, 2001). This left some schools to exclude teams such as Crispus Attucks from their schedule altogether (even after the formal integration of the IHSAA), while others invited all-black institutions to their town as a sort of “novelty act” (Pierce, 2000). As all-white and all-

black teams became read underneath this racialized lens, it was clear that high school basketball performed in extremely politicized terms. Crispus Attucks fans used basketball as a platform to prove to their white opponents that they were good, capable, and equal citizens of the state (not ‘outsiders’ as they were made out to be) who deserved respect and recognition (Pierce, 2000). Alternatively, many white ‘hoosiers’ saw basketball as an opportunity to rearticulate their power through winning, and thus claiming the sport as still belonging to them – the established ‘insiders’.

The 1954 season was therefore significant, in that Milan – the all-white team from small-town Indiana and symbol of what the tournament *used* to represent – faced an all-black team from Indianapolis, who symbolized the new direction of Indiana’s basketball tournament (and society at large). Eliminating Crispus Attucks from the tournament in the semi-state game, Milan advanced to the finals where they were eventually crowned victors. After the difficult loss, Oscar Robertson (2003) recalled the palpable racialized significance of the victory: “There were a lot of people happy to see us lose, probably even more who were happy to see a bunch of small town white farm boys beat us” (p. 40). In fact, Milan was so widely adored that 40,000 people from across the entire state of Indiana descended upon the small town with a population of just 1,000 to celebrate the championship.

It had become clear to many white citizens that by the early 50s ‘hoosier basketball’ (and more importantly, the ‘hoosier state’) was indeed changing. Thus, situated against a Crispus Attucks team that seemed poised to forever change the

landscape of ‘hoosier basketball’,⁵³ the Milan Miracle was symbolic through its ability to reflect a more familiar and comforting image of what basketball (or more broadly, Indiana) “used to be like”.⁵⁴ Milan came to represent a romanticized, authentic, pure and white past – one that was under threat by an age of social difference. And, although Milan continues to be remembered in a similar fashion today, the team’s whiteness has been rendered invisible to contemporary readers. Rather than use Milan as an opportunity to understand the racial significance attributed to *white bodies* in Indiana’s basketball culture, many of the racialized meanings that were affixed to Milan in the 50s continue to operate surreptitiously in the twenty first century. As the 1954 season is remembered and placed directly alongside the 1955 season, the embedded racial politics of ‘hoosier basketball’ are considerably obscured. Whereas the 1955 championship won by Crispus Attucks is remembered for its political significance, the Milan Miracle of 1954 is memorialized for its representative ability to articulate the “authentic” or “pure” roots of ‘hoosier basketball’.⁵⁵

Therefore, Milan is seen to have no political significance; despite being called upon in the ‘hoosier memory’ to authentically portray an extremely political fifty years of ‘hoosier basketball’ (the large majority of which sought to maintain an exclusively white sporting culture). Winning back to back state championships in 1955 and 1956, Crispus Attucks ushered in a new era that symbolized a departure from the “roots” of Indiana high school basketball. As Paino (2001) describes:

⁵³ In 1951, Crispus Attucks also advanced extremely far in the tournament. Their support from the black community illustrated to white audiences the degree to which basketball served a political function in the struggle for racial equality.

⁵⁴ In its earliest years, the tournament was dominated by small, rural, all-white schools.

⁵⁵ This similarly marks the all-black roster of Crispus Attucks as relative ‘outsiders’ to this authentic embodiment – or a threat to it.

This revolution negatively affected the relationship between Hoosiers and basketball. From the 1960s on, it became increasingly difficult to keep the faith that basketball was played best by young, white men who learned the values of discipline, teamwork, obedience, and self-sacrifice in small-town Indiana. While Hoosiers still loved their basketball, the image of the farm-boy ballplayer began to lose its social and cultural significance (p. 75).

However, as basketball no longer *seems* to mean what it once did, I contend that the heartstrings of memory are tugged such that romanticized portraits of white, male, rural ‘hoosier basketball players’ maintain sociocultural significance today. Evident through historical representations,⁵⁶ popular literature (Guffey, 1993; Honeywell, 1997), folklore, and film⁵⁷ – the 1954 Milan Miracle occupies a mythical space in the ‘hoosier’ imaginary (one that distortedly inscribes whiteness with innocence and purity). As such, the old racial hierarchies that have since been rendered invisible are dialectically brought to the surface according to new logics. Best captured through the 1986 film symbolically titled *Hoosiers*, the remembrance of Milan high school assists one in learning about, and understanding their ‘hoosier’ body. And, as ‘hoosier’ identity politics come to merge with(in) Indiana’s basketball culture, the demarcation of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ becomes noticeably apparent through a carefully mediated set of representational politics.

Learning About Hoosiers through *Hoosiers* (The Film)

In a movie that makes conspicuous use of the politicized term ‘hoosier’, there exists an opportunity to critically interrogate the contemporary meanings of this cultural identity. Who are the ‘hoosiers’? What do they represent? Where are they from?

⁵⁶ Throughout the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, there are many allusions to the Milan miracle through video, newspaper, images, exhibits, etc.

⁵⁷ The 1986 film *Hoosiers* is based on the Milan Miracle.

In chapter four, I detailed the underlying racialization of the state moniker, and claimed that whiteness still remains a deeply embedded part of ‘hoosiness’. Not only does *Hoosiers* reaffirm this point, but it also suggests the degree to which Indiana’s basketball culture provides a stage for the reification of these racialized identities. According to hooks (1992), film “more than any other media experience, determines how blackness and black people are seen and how other groups will respond to us based on their relation to these constructed and consumed images” (p. 5). This point becomes particularly salient given Indiana’s segregated racial landscape, whereby the majority of non-white citizens live in relatively large cities in comparison to the overwhelming number of (largely rural) counties that remain predominantly or almost exclusively white. Underneath these living patterns, many ‘hoosiers’ are raised in normalized/normalizing environments where they are not expected to confront social difference. Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007) provide evidence to suggest that growing up in a segregated environment often leads people to continue living racially isolated lives by choice – even if social difference is encountered in school or work environments. Reaffirming bell hooks’s point, images (and specifically film) act as a medium through which many whites experience and understand the Other without having to go through the troubles of interacting with, and learning from different races on their own accord.

Hoosiers is more than just a cult-classic or favourite movie within the state. For some, it’s the first thing that comes to mind when posed with the question “what does it mean to be a hoosier?” Emily was one of many respondents to suggest that “being ‘hoosier’” was perfectly portrayed in the movie *Hoosiers*, so I asked her what led people to make such a claim:

Yeah, well they can see; they can put themselves [sp] in the shoes of the people back in Milan. And they know that feeling, because they were from a small town! And they didn't have everything, like some of the richer places might have. So it was just a – it was like us winning the state championship. Who'd ever thought of it?! I'm sure, of course that was before my time, but I'm sure the people here just never thought of it – and when it happened it was like the most wonderful thing in the world. It was just like an answer to a prayer. We became somebody. We were important. Our town was important. Our basketball team was important (Personal Interview).

Emily's usage of the term "small town" is of particular interest. In a colour-blind age, it has become difficult to sift through subtextual and racially coded language (Winant, 1997). Nonetheless, binary language such as "small-town" / "big city", "rural" / "urban", and "underdog" / "favourite" all come to be racialized as they are read against a complex dialectical and intersecting nexus of history, social politics, geographies, symbols and representations. Thus, by saying "small-town", Emily not only connotes an assumed whiteness that is on par with the state's historical and contemporary demographics; but also, she is suggesting a particular white epistemology through which 'hoosiers' "know the feeling." Of course, what follows is that "big-city" (read: non-white) populations don't know the feeling and are subsequently excluded from this shared experience of an imagined 'hoosier' community.

The big-city versus small-town narrative is conspicuously racialized in *Hoosiers*. Black bodies are called upon to represent the big-city favourite, and act as the Other

through which white ‘hoosiers’ collectively make sense of their small-town underdog selves. Interestingly enough, the directors of the film took great liberties to reinforce these racialized narratives. In his autobiography, Oscar Robertson once again provides a critical voice – this time in relation to the movie:

I ask you this: when the fictional version of Milan – a team named the Hickory Huskers – reaches the championship game in *Hoosiers*, what does it mean that the filmmakers twisted the truth? Instead of having Milan defeat Muncie Central and an integrated team with two black guys on it, which is what happened in real life, Hickory defeated a fictional team of black players, coached exclusively by black men, whose rooting section consists of black men, women, boys, and girls (Robertson, 2003, p. 40-41).

As hooks (1992) might assert, “white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination” (p. 2). Hall (1997) further elaborates by calling this a “regime of representation”, whereby dominant groups in society come to exercise a cultural or symbolic form of power through representational practices. In my interview with Keith, he recalled an experience he had with the writer of the film before its release. Through his story, it becomes clear to see who maintains control over images, and whose voices ‘count’:

I told Angelo Pizzo – he’s the guy, the director. I said, “Man, it didn’t happen like that.” He said “Oh yeah?” I said “Yeah” ... I say it wasn’t South Bend Central that played in the championship game, it was Muncie Central. It wasn’t no black coach – I told him all of that. But he wasn’t going to change nothing. They hadn’t even put it out yet, the movie. It

hadn't even been on screen yet, but they didn't change nothing. So they print what they want to print (Personal Interview).⁵⁸

There is no way to know how many people voiced similar concerns as they began to learn of the film's misrepresentation of racialized bodies. Nevertheless, those responsible for the film's production were content with *their* interpretation of the Milan Miracle, and evidently did not take into account the voices of marginalized populations.⁵⁹ Thus, the manipulation of black bodies in *Hoosiers* comes to articulate the beliefs, fears and anxieties of the white imaginary by demarcating clear 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Or, as Roberts (1999) poignantly notes: "*Hoosiers* expresses the racial attitudes of the late twentieth century rather than those of the mid-century" (Roberts, 1999, p. 71). That is to say, the film completely erases the racial subtext of the mid-century from its storyline. The extent to which Milan's support stemmed from their whiteness (i.e. a team that culturally symbolized the "moral purity" upon which the game and 'hoosier' community was founded upon) is left untouched by the film's producers.⁶⁰

Consequently, the sporting realm is produced as a strictly physical domain that is intrinsically racialized as 'black' in contrast to the 'white' intellectual sphere (Abdel-Shehid, 2005; Hoberman, 1997). Black actors are completely absent in the film until the final scene, and used to firmly embed the all-white Hickory Huskers (Milan Indians) as underdogs. What makes them underdogs is the naturalized realm under which they find

⁵⁸ When Keith says the word "they", one can interpret that he is referring to this regime of representation – with "they" being the white 'hoosier' power structure.

⁵⁹ To provide an example of modern day regimes of representation, a proposed statue of a nameless, shoeless, and shirtless ex-slave to be erected in downtown Indianapolis has been met with outcry by many black citizens. Indianapolis already has one such statue of another nameless slave holding up shackles as part of their State Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. Indianapolis's black communities are asking for other representations of black bodies aside from slavery.

⁶⁰ It is left untouched in an overt sense; however, the representational politics connotatively reinforce this theme without ever consciously reflecting on it.

themselves competing against the physically superior Other. Furthermore, the cinematic strategies employed in this scene only help to assist in the production of a clear racialized distinction between the underdog and favourite:

The climatic black-white confrontation between South Bend Central and Hickory is dominated by an extremely percussive music track, while the crowd noise is distorted, creating a menacing sound. A long shot of the South Bend Central team entering the court establishes a sense of size and power, while a reaction shot of Coach Dale displays a sense of apprehension and foreboding. The Hickory team at this point becomes the equivalent of the great white hopes combating black heavyweight champion Jack Johnson (Briley, 2005, p. 15).

Racial politics, therefore, are not discussed at the visible surface of the movie's plotline but rather come to infer meaning through intertextual readings of whiteness and blackness. In other words, as the Milan Miracle becomes remembered in an increasingly multicultural society, *Hoosiers* "reinforces whiteness in a way that is unthreatening and often tied into a discourse of [state] identity and imagined community" (Hylton, 2009, p. 71). This romanticized portrait of the past creates what Hylton (2009) calls a "crisis of whiteness" (p. 70) – whereby increased numbers of 'outsiders' (symbolized through black athletes in *Hoosiers*) have not only contributed to the downfall of "the white athlete" in sport; but also the deterioration of simple, pure American traditions and values.

Although *Hoosiers* comes to articulate Indiana culture through the lens of a white epistemology, it does so invisibly. Its narrative claims to represent a universal experience

that all ‘hoosiers’ can relate to. Dyer (2008) describes this position as being ‘just’ human, writing: “The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can’t do that – they can only speak for their race. But non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of a race” (p. 10). Not surprisingly then, critiques such as Oscar Robertson’s complicate the distinctions between what is considered to be a universal or white subjectivity. Lisa, a middle aged black woman seemed to accept that the film spoke from a more universalist lens since “that’s what people see”:

I never saw that it [*Hoosiers*] took on a racial overtone or that those points came out as much as the fact that the little guy beating the big guy. I think that’s what it was all about, and that’s what people see, is the little guy taking on the big guy and coming out the victor (Personal Interview).

Angela, an elderly black woman who lived during the Milan Miracle had a different perspective on the film’s contemporary significance:

Well it’s like the great white hope. You know – in boxing. When Johnson – the boxer Johnson – heavyweight champion knocked out somebody way back a hundred years ago. And they go and look for the great white hope (Personal Interview).

Lastly, Mike, a multiracial male in his twenties who had already expressed a disdain for the term ‘hoosier’ (as noted in chapter four), explained how the *Hoosiers* storyline reaffirms racial hierarchies and positions of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’:

Scott: Okay, what are your thoughts on it? [*Hoosiers*]

Mike: Uhhh...it was okay? It was...well, I mean, most ‘hoosiers’ love *Hoosiers*. They just love it. And to me, I saw it when I was older and it

just brought back connotations of ‘hoosier’ – the negative connotations of the good old boy, redneck...It’s just very small town people can just very easily associate with them. They can see themselves living in that town. They can see their son being state champion or whatever. They can see them shooting the three. They just understand it (Personal Interview).

As Lisa, Angela and Mike each demonstrate, there is no *single* way under which non-white populations come to understand *Hoosiers*. Their respective readings are complex, multitudinous and vary along a continuum of (non)criticism. Alternatively, white interviewees overwhelmingly came to espouse the same dominant narratives underneath which they made sense of the film.⁶¹ Exemplified through Emily’s aforementioned words and also prudently observed by Mike, ‘hoosiers’ come to *see their ‘hoosier’ body* through the film. In a Lacanian sense, this “seeing of oneself” would be considered a misrecognizing on the part of the subject, in that he/she maintains fragmented and contradictory identities that constantly seek to undermine the unitary imag(in)ed body before them (Helstein, 2007). Nonetheless, as ‘hoosiers’ come to discipline themselves as the Milan-esque ‘underdog’, they simultaneously interact with and reproduce a complex set of racial politics that have largely been made invisible in the contemporary era.

Small-Town Underdogs and the Marking of Outsiders

Read against the romantic memorializations of Indiana basketball (under which *Hoosiers* remains a part), it is clear that blackness, big-city, urban, and “favourite” conflate to produce the Othered ‘non-hoosier’; while symbols of whiteness, small-town,

⁶¹ This is not to say that *all* of Indiana’s white populace understands *Hoosiers* in the same way. However, there exists a dominant reading through which ‘hoosiers’ can positively construct their own ‘hoosier’ self.

rural, and “underdog” work to construct authentic ‘hoosier’ subjectivities. Sport, by its very nature, aids in the construction and reproduction of these binary logics. Players, symbols, teams, and nation-states compete against Others in an atmosphere of difference through which deeper signified messages emerge (e.g. good versus evil; Canadian versus American; black versus white; democracy versus communism, etc.). In most cases, these narratives do not exist independent of one another, but rather intersect to produce a complex set of meanings and relations of power (evidenced by Indiana’s basketball context). More specifically, this power comes to represent a normalizing influence, in that diverse collections of bodies are subject to problematic, over-simplified characterizations underneath which they must negotiate an identity of conformity or resistance.

Gary, a middle aged white man from Martinsville, expressed the degree to which ‘hoosiers’ root for the underdog:

But we’re always for that little guy who is not supposed to be as good as what everyone else says...In the sectional, Eminence is one of the smallest schools in the state of Indiana. I can remember back to when they were in the sectional. If they were playing a bigger school, the Martinsville people, Mooreseville and everybody else would show up and yell against the big school and everybody would be for Eminence...If it were Martinsville and we were playing some small school and they upset us, we probably wouldn’t feel near as bad because that nature of the fact that we’re always for that underdog (Personal Interview).

What is particularly interesting about Gary's comments is the underlying theme of an imagined community. Competing in the 4A division of high school basketball featuring the biggest (city) schools in the state, Martinsville fans consider themselves underdogs. However, as Gary notes, this 'underdog' identity is far from being fixed and can occasionally be brought into question depending upon the opponent. Forced to negotiate with this contradiction, Gary suggests that Martinsville citizens align themselves with the "cause" of smaller towns and schools. Consequently, one gets the impression that the game on the floor is not the only one being played; an ideological battle between "small towns" and "big cities" is always inconspicuously at work. As their own 'underdog' status is called into question by smaller schools such as Eminence, Martinsville's community – in fear of being perceived as the "big-city" – looks to perform and legitimize their 'hoosier' selves by aligning with schools such as Eminence. The presumption is that each of these schools share a common experience rooted in a bygone imagined community.

Bill suggested as much in our interview. His opinion was that authentic 'hoosierness' was deeply rooted in the small town school:

I think for a long time – hoosiers; people; residents of Indiana, they identified themselves with small towns. May I prove this by saying, first championship 1911 – it was not until 1955 or 44 years later, it took 44 years before the large town of Indianapolis had their first championship...To answer your question I do believe that Indiana identified with small towns beating the bigger towns (Personal Interview).

Bill's remembering of the first forty four years of "hoosier hysteria" reflects the deracialized and romanticized narratives of Indiana basketball today. He does not recall or make mention to the fact that black populations were largely expelled from participating in the tournament during the first half of the century, and instead paints the picture of an era dominated by small towns. There were, of course, many small town schools participating in the tournament throughout these years; particularly before school consolidation became popular in the 1950s and 1960s (Martin, 1998). However, tiny rural communities oftentimes found themselves competing against much larger developing towns/cities in high school competition.⁶² Interestingly then, Bill ignores the fact that "big cities" still existed as part of Indiana's high school basketball tradition in the first half of the twentieth century, and instead makes the racialized suggestion that "big cities" don't enter into the sporting culture until 1955 when the all-black roster from Crispus Attucks emerges victorious.

Bill's use of the word 'hoosier' also provides an interesting point for analysis. Creating an "authentic" 'hoosier' embodiment, he links the moniker to "people; residents of Indiana" and describes an apparent naturalized affinity for small-towns. Once again, white privilege is reaffirmed as Bill claims to speak from a position of universality that *all* 'hoosiers' can relate to. However, it is one that is inherently exclusionary. At the time, Indiana's black population overwhelmingly lived in cities and/or emigrated from places outside the state (Thornbrough, 1996). The wildly successful 1950s Crispus Attucks teams (located within the "big-city" of Indianapolis) were vehemently supported by many of these same people as they came to believe that "sports reflected well on a group's

⁶² For example, cities such as Muncie, Hammond, Fort Wayne, Evansville, and South Bend –all of which won state championships before 1954 – had populations that were well into the tens of thousands.

potential for citizenship and character” (Pierce, 2000, p. 3). More to the point, as many all-black schools were forced to travel outside the state to play basketball games prior to 1942, their respective communities had little vested interest in the success of small-town schools. These experiences have been largely marginalized and constructed as ‘non-hoosier’ in relation to the normalizing discourses of ‘hoosier’ whiteness.

Today, Indianapolis maintains its racialized existence in the ‘hoosier’ imaginary. According to Jeremy, a white male in his mid-twenties from the small town of Columbus, IN:

I mean, people definitely tag on “at least Indianapolis has a black population” – while the other cities are going to be like the small towns where it’s like, not one black person in the city (Personal Interview).

In contrast to the many small towns that remain predominantly (or almost exclusively) white, Indianapolis and other big cities are constructed as visible sites for social difference. Through the mythologized visions of pure ‘hoosier basketball’ these populations continue to be marked as somehow less authentic in their Indiana citizenship. That is to say, their purpose within memorializations of ‘hoosier basketball’ is to merely serve as the Other; the villain; the favourite; and/or the threat. And, given the inextricable link between basketball and the ‘hoosier’ identity, these people are subsequently located ‘outside’ *real* ‘hoosierness’. This difference is made clear in Hoose’s (1995) book *Hoosiers: The Fabulous Basketball Life of Indiana*, where he titles one of the chapters “The Region – Hoops in the Other Indiana”. The Region (a nickname for the northwestern part of Indiana) is home to a significant portion of Indiana’s black population – including Gary, IN where 84% of the total populace identifies as black. By

merely including this geographic location in his book, Hoose actually departs from the more common authorial practice of erasing or severely undermining Indiana's black basketball histories. Yet, importantly he makes a clear distinction between what is "real" 'hoosier' basketball and that "Other" game played by "Other" people in Gary: "To basketball fans, Gary is *Hoop Dreams* to downstate's *Hoosiers*. It is racehorse ball, city ball, playground ball, black ball, rough ball" (Hoose, 1995, p. 60). Gary's "Otherness" is made hypervisible in comparison to the more invisible whiteness of *Hoosiers* (i.e. 'hoosier basketball'). It is characterized by its "urban-ness" in relation to the "rural-ness" of *Hoosiers*. It is described in more chaotic and unstructured terms such as "racehorse", "playground" and "rough" – as opposed to 'hoosier basketball's' more "fundamentally sound" and "structured game". And as these static conceptions of blackness and whiteness are dichotomized, they reflect the fears and anxieties of a racist white imaginary intent on defining a more "primitive" or even "animalistic" (e.g. "rough"; "racehorse") culture that exists in Indiana's (racialized) big cities.

Harold, a white male senior citizen and retired referee from Martinsville, IN, had fond memories leftover from his days travelling across the state to call high school basketball games. Indianapolis, however, was one location that he tended to avoid:

Marion County we called some of the county schools; as far as the Indianapolis public schools, we just didn't like the basketball played in the public schools in Indianapolis. Besides that, there was nobody at the ball games... They had some very talented young players; don't get me wrong. The quality of basketball was probably there. I guess more than anything, it was just the crowd. Had a very good friend who coached at the old

Crispus Attucks high school for a couple years. His wife was sitting in behind the bench; someone pulled a gun on somebody sitting next to his wife. I don't need that (Personal Interview).

To begin, Harold's remarks demonstrate his belief that a "different" style of basketball is played in Indianapolis. While he acknowledges the "talents" of these young players and accedes that they *probably* play a quality game, it is one that he cannot appreciate. In other words, he remains steadfastly committed to static notions of a 'black style' and 'white style' of basketball that so easily develop underneath discourses of 'hoosier basketball'. This dissociation with the Other infers his implicit association with the more normalized and invisible centre of 'hoosiness'.

Equally important is Harold's condemnation of the Indianapolis community. Using basketball as a medium to speak to broader social issues, he offers a criminalized reading of Indianapolis. By conferring upon the once-all-black school of Crispus Attucks, he describes an instance of gun violence so as to "legitimate" his anxieties.⁶³ Furthermore, he castigates Indianapolis for not having the same kind of community support that small-towns like Martinsville demonstrate at games. Asked to make sense of this apparent disparity, Harold responded:

So many of the young men playing – they're from a one parent home. Dad doesn't even know they're playing probably. And so there's nobody that shows up to watch them. It's just...there's a lot of other distractions or things to take them away from the game and as I say, the family is not as prevalent as it is in the smaller schools. I mean, they're just...there's no family support. A kid comes to the ball game; his mom and dad maybe

⁶³ Just one month after my interview with Harold, a shooting took place at a Martinsville middle school.

neither one will be there. You go to Martinsville, I'm seeing mom and dad's at every ball game. Home or away (Personal Interview).

Thus, "big city" schools are not only located outside Indiana's basketball culture, but more importantly become positioned as antithetical to "small town" traditional conservative 'hoosier' values (e.g. the nuclear family). Similarly, as Harold's critique connotatively refers to black populations, one cannot help but recall the 1965 Moynihan Report, which bell hooks (2003) convincingly argues simultaneously attacked black women and emasculated black manhood: "White men were attacking black men in the sixties for not fulfilling the patriarchal role when it came to work and family" (p. 13).

Lawrence (2001) expresses a similar type of panic over the "big city's" inability to draw comparable crowds to smaller-towns across Indiana. Subsequently, there is a sense of resentment that permeates into his writing, locating these schools outside true 'hoosier basketball' for having compromised its symbolic significance in the contemporary era. As he describes basketball contests at Manual High School (a predominantly black school in Indianapolis) he proclaims: "This was by no means a prime example of Hoosier Hysteria" (p. 182). Therefore, as the notion of a universal 'hoosier basketball' continues to be espoused today, many commentators are left wondering why it exists without universal significance. This has reaffirmed the belief that authentic 'hoosier basketball' is found in rural parts of the state, leading Lawrence (2001), Harold and many others to actively search for the last remnants of this *real* 'hoosier' experience so as to experience the past (and moreover, their *real* 'hoosier' selves): "I live here [Indianapolis] and still prefer to travel elsewhere, to find games that feel more like events, that include more of a sense of Place in the evening's mix"

(Lawrence, 2001, p. 174). That place, is the imagined ‘hoosier’ community upon which basketball’s myth firmly rests. Lawrence (2001) further elaborates:

At a lot of the games (especially in smaller towns and rural areas), it’s simply impossible not to notice the immediacy in the air, how much seems to be at stake, the blurring of lines between ballteam and town. This is not just parents watching their sons and daughters perform in an extracurricular activity: This is an adult community that actively looks forward to each new season... They not only identify with the action on the court but, in their loyalty and support, actually feel like they’re a part of that action, a part of any success that the team might have (and they’re right). (p. xi-xii).

As basketball continues to be thought of as a space for ‘hoosiers’ to understand their bodies and community alike, it is important that this sporting culture be problematized for its pedagogical function in teaching ‘hoosiness’. That is not to suggest basketball unilaterally projects meanings upon ‘hoosier’ subjects, since it is clear that the sport derives its own meanings from ‘hoosier’ body politics as well (i.e. the sport and the bodies constituted therein are always constructed by/constructing one another). However, as these “cultural codes by which some bodies are privileged over others” (Newman, 2010, p. 11) become reified, inscribed and performed through the symbolic territory of Indiana basketball, it is necessary that we “decode” or make visible the neo-conservative expressions of whiteness that ‘hoosier basketball’ attempts to reproduce.

The Stylistic Elements of “Hoosier Basketball”

One of the resounding themes to emerge from interviews with Martinsville citizens was a belief in a particular “hoosier” brand of basketball. In other words, the style of play and/or movements of bodies serve an ideological function in marking authentic ‘hoosier’ subjects, insomuch that style comes to be read through the dichotomized racial lens of Indiana basketball. Throughout the 1950s, Crispus Attucks (the all-black institution from Indianapolis) recognized the racialized significance that ‘hoosier basketball’ placed on style. In 1951, the team purposefully altered the way they played so as to appeal to the established “white” style:

Attucks players shelved their wide-open and flashy game during the tournament and instead played a more traditional, and slow, basketball style. In so doing, they made themselves recognizable to Indianapolis basketball fans and, by extension, proved that the dismantling of racial restrictions would not dangerously change the city’s landscape. Their play and self-reliance spoke to a new front where blacks ascribed political meaning to their public activities and achievements. Moreover, they adhered to the longstanding precept in African American political protest that rights and freedom would accrue to those who acted respectfully and courteously (Pierce, 2000, p. 14).

This began to change during Attucks’s championship years. Although the transformation away from an accepted ‘hoosier’ brand of basketball reaffirmed the suspicions of many white fans, the new-found speed, aggressiveness, and confidence exuded by Attucks’s athletes sent a strong political message to onlookers: “They seemed to capture the energy

of the Avenue [Indianapolis Avenue], a spirit that mixed resentment with restrictions and pride in themselves.” (Roberts, 1999, p. 49). Even prior to the formal desegregation of the IHSAA, style came to have great political meaning for all-white audiences. As Paino (2001) outlines, the occasional black and/or Jewish player was often made hypervisible in their difference to the “social order basketball represented” (p. 69). Newspapers often scrutinized a perceived “difference” in style of play as a means to cast much broader negative stereotypes upon a person’s racialized identity.

Today, the sacred grounds of ‘hoosier basketball’ continue to be regulated by white bodies whom control what is and is not considered to be authentically representative of the sport’s *true* (white) style. Given that ‘outsiders’ have consistently been marked as different or threatening in their approach to playing, there must be an established ‘hoosier aesthetic’ upon which they come to be measured against. Harold’s aforementioned quote regarding his dislike for ‘Indianapolis basketball’ begins to articulate the degree to which one’s own ‘hoosier’ identity rests in his/her ability to recognize and appreciate *real* Indiana basketball when he/she sees it. However, Harold had difficulty articulating exactly *what* ‘hoosier basketball’ looked like. Instead, he based his opinion off of what it *was not*. Thus, Ralph Ellison’s poignant observation that “...whites cannot walk, talk, sing, conceive of laws or justice, think of sex, love, the family or freedom without responding to the presence of Negroes” is extremely helpful in understanding Harold’s sensemaking; for, it is Otherness that affords his whiteness with significance. Similarly, Harold called upon the style of game played in the predominantly black National Basketball Association (NBA) to formulate his conceptualization of ‘hoosier basketball’:

You don't find an abundance of people in Indiana like the NBA. And I think that's one of the reasons; it's just – you know, you get all these superstars, wide bodies and moving everybody around, you know? It's not what I grew up thinking basketball was (Personal Interview).

As such, 'hoosier basketball' is something entirely different from the style of game played in the NBA. Harold draws specific attention to the site of the body (which taken in conjunction with the NBA, overwhelmingly refers to a black body), and thinks of it in overly-physicalized terms.⁶⁴ He also goes on to suggest that Indiana doesn't have an "abundance" of *those* types of bodies. True Indiana basketball, apparently, relies far less on a player's physical attributes.

Instead, to overcome the 'naturally superior' black body, white athletes are constructed as having to make up for their physical limitations through non-physical measures. Only by playing as a disciplined "team" with a rational game plan can these prototypical 'hoosiers' prevail against the advanced physical capacities of Others. Bill elaborates:

It's team basketball. It's built around the philosophy that you win not by having superstars, but you have five players playing together. Everybody has a role to play, and the concept of Milan beating Muncie was based on the fact that they worked as a team (Personal Interview).

Similar to Harold, Bill uses the word "superstars" to refer to the style of game played by Others. In order to see the 'hoosier' brand of basketball as "team-oriented", it is necessary to make this distinction. However, the underlying implication that a team

⁶⁴ During our interview, Harold also referred to the NBA as "survival of the fittest" (Personal Interview), elucidating a Darwinian view of the black male body.

featuring one or two exceptional players does not “play as a team” severely undermines and distorts the collective efforts of the entire roster and coaches alike. From this reading, one gets the misguided impression that ‘non-hoosier’ basketball is played according to no real game plan; and merely relies upon the natural athletic capabilities of “superstar” athletes. Set against this racialized backdrop, the white ‘hoosier’ style of basketball supposedly requires superior mental aptitude and rationality in contrast to the overly physicalized realm of an Othered ‘non-hoosier’ aesthetic. It is significant that, once again, the 1954 Milan team is remembered for its ability to authentically represent ‘hoosiness’ – in this case, the way Indiana basketball is played. Although Crispus Attucks won the state tournament three times in the next five years, their style was (and continues to be) thought of as threatening the team-oriented aesthetic embodied by Milan and other small-town schools. Point guard Oscar Robertson, who would go on to become an NBA hall of famer, has been memorialized as a “superstar” figure responsible for catapulting Attucks to back-to-back championships. Yet, despite his abilities as an individual player, Attucks was successful because of their ability to work *together* and complement one another as a team. It was just as much a collective effort as Milan’s victory in 1954; although it hasn’t been remembered as such.

Much of this might also have to do with the fact that Attucks’s style was not, and has not been thought of as conforming to “pure” or “fundamental” basketball; similar to how the NBA has been castigated by some ‘hoosiers’ today. As both Attucks and the NBA are constructed as racialized Others in the discourses of ‘hoosier basketball’, they are positioned as threats to what “once existed” as a pure (white) game (Roberts, 1999; Robertson, 2003). Gary used the Martinsville high school girls team of the late nineties as

an example of the importance ‘hoosiers’ place on “pure” or “fundamentally sound” basketball:

Our team at the time was very very good – I mean they were very fundamental...Our girls played – what we called, again, that pure basketball game. They did things fundamentally – didn’t make a lot of mistakes, shot well, did this, defended, did that. And they played that way.

And again, people appreciate that. They really do (Personal Interview).

This notion that Indiana basketball represents a “purer” style of game than what is found today would seem to be a gross romanticization of the past (and demonization of the present). Prior to what has been called a “revolution” (Lane, 2007; Paino, 2001) in the sport of basketball – initiated by black athletes from the 60s onwards – Indiana’s basketball culture was anything *but* pure. Stylistically, the concept of “stalling” had become a widespread irritating practice that, according to Commissioner Arthur Trester “...leads to more situations causing ill-feeling between communities and schools than in any other branch of athletics” (Beck, 2003, p. 58). The 1954 Milan team famously froze the ball for over four minutes in the fourth quarter of the championship game, leaving everyone on the court at a complete standstill.⁶⁵ And, before the introduction of the 10-second back-court rule (introduced in 1938), it was not uncommon to see offensive players hold onto the ball in the back court for minutes at a time after gaining possession. There was even a tactic used in 1923 by Butlerville called the “squirrel stunt”, whereby

⁶⁵ Today, Indiana high school basketball still does not use a shot clock, and the “stall” technique continues to be used. Interviewee Bill thought this practice required great “patience” to successfully execute – though critical voices suggest that it takes away from the flow and creativity of the game. During games I attended, I constantly felt like an ‘outsider’ whenever a team implemented the stalling technique. I should make clear that this is not a tactic that is unique to Indiana high school basketball; however, given its romanticized place in the history of ‘hoosier basketball’ (e.g. Milan Miracle) the stall comes to be inscribed with more cultural significance than what might be evident in other states.

one player sat atop the shoulders of a teammate to shoot the ball over top their opponent(s) (Field Notes; see Appendix B). Lastly, prior to the late 1930s and early 1940s the jump shot had yet to even grace high school basketball, leaving smaller players to take set shots using both hands (Beck, 2003). The clever manipulation and bending of rules has therefore always existed as part of ‘hoosier basketball’, resulting in a fluid on-court aesthetic that constantly challenges static notions of “purity” or “fundamental soundness.” Moreover, principles founded upon defense, shooting, and ball-possession can hardly be seen as unique to Indiana’s basketball culture (as Gary contends). However, the fact that they *are* claimed as distinctly ‘hoosier’ provides a glimpse into how Indiana’s white bodies want to see themselves. Playing defense, shooting with accuracy, and limiting mistakes therefore comes to signify a number of other complex and intersecting meanings through which Othered styles of basketball are constantly judged.

Class Basketball and the ‘Hoosier’ Work Eth(n)ic

Borrowing from Newman (2010), the dualistic concept of a ‘hoosier’ *eth(n)ic* is meant to expose the nexus at which ‘hoosier’ morality and ‘hoosier’ whiteness conjoin to produce in(di)visible racialized logics. Indiana’s basketball culture, I argue, acts as a central means through which people come to learn about, and reproduce this eth(n)ic. In theoretical terms, Carrington (2002) elaborates:

...sports contests...act as a key signifier for wider questions about identity within racially demarcated societies in which racial narratives about the self and society are read both into and from sporting contests that are imbued with racial meanings (p. 141).

Given the complex set of neo-Conservative, white identity politics that remain deeply embedded within ‘hoosiness’, basketball’s cultural production of a ‘hoosier’ eth(n)ic acts as an interesting point for analysis.

America, as “the land of opportunity” remains bound to the false belief that anyone can succeed if they “work hard enough”. Otherwise known as the American dream, Conservative and neoliberal discourses of individuality continue to rely upon this myth whilst turning a blind eye to structures of inequality. The ramifications of this thinking have created real-life consequences for twenty first century lower and middle class populations across the United States; many of whom are expected to make do without “privileges” such as social welfare and worker’s rights. However, for Indiana citizens it has become increasingly difficult to speak out against these injustices.

Recalling from chapter four that ‘hoosier’ bodies are constructed as having an exceptional work ethic, those who speak out against institutionalized inhibitors of social mobility assume a position that is connotatively ‘non-hoosier’. These attitudes, as was made clear through interviews, are in part learned through Indiana’s basketball culture.

As the 1954 Milan Miracle continues its romanticized existence in the ‘hoosier’ imaginary, so too does the memory of a single class basketball tournament. Before 1997, all of Indiana’s high schools competed against one another with the hopes of being crowned *the* state champion. But in a controversial decision that continues to be a contentious topic of debate, the IHSAA introduced a four-class system based on school-size. Suddenly, there were four state champions each year, which for some citizens marked the end of *real* ‘hoosier basketball’. In other words, the ghost of Milan’s 1954 victory continues to haunt today’s high school basketball landscape, as people are

continuously reminded of the fact that Milan's story (and more importantly, Milan's *meaning*) has been severely compromised. As 'hoosiers' come to see themselves – and 'hoosier basketball' – through the memory of Milan, they see the superior work ethic upon which their identity apparently rests, as Emily notes:

But you don't usually get to be a state championship from a real small team where there's no budget for athletics; there's no equipment and back in the days when Milan and some of those little teams played, they didn't have the facilities, the equipment or anything. And so, they just had to develop more talent and work harder (Personal Interview).

Ironically, Milan actually had much greater access to resources and facilities than Crispus Attucks – their memorialized big-city, all-black Other – as Keith described his team's "gym" during the fifties:

You could sit at half court and shoot a jump shot – that's how small the thing was. There really wasn't no floor. And they had it marked as a floor – but it was so small and they had two baskets but it was just a place to practice for us man... They called it a gym but it wasn't no gym (Personal Interview).

Despite not having a formal gym (they played their "home" games at Butler University's Hinkle Fieldhouse), the memorialization of Crispus Attucks is marked outside the symbolic 'hoosier' territory of having to "work hard". This space is reserved for small town, overwhelmingly white, and rural schools like Milan. Thus, as 'hoosiers' look to understand themselves as hard-working citizens who believe in the potential of the (Milan) underdog / American dream, class basketball is constructed as antithetical to not

only Indiana's basketball culture...but also the deeper set of identity politics upon which 'hoosiers' understand themselves and the world they live in.

According to Ron Newlin, past director of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, the cultural significance of Indiana basketball rests in the belief of a 'hoosier' work ethic:

When basketball caught on in this state in the first two decades of the century, we were still a rural state, within some people's living memory of being a pioneer state...Basketball appeals to the pioneer's belief in self-reliance...We want our heroes to be *made*, not born – preferably *self-made* (Gildea, 1997, p. 48; emphasis in original).

Once again, the assumption that some bodies are naturally "born" as great basketball players illustrates the underlying racial politics of 'hoosier basketball'. That is to say, the "self-made" hard-working 'hoosier' body is consistently embodied through memorialized images of small-town, white, ruralized athletes (e.g. Milan; Damon Bailey; Rick Mount; Bobby Plump; Larry Bird; Steve Alford);⁶⁶ while big-city, black, urbanized bodies from Indiana's past (e.g. Oscar Robertson, George McGinnis, Glenn Robinson, Zach Randolph, Greg Oden, etc.) are presumably left to be thought of as undesirable "superstar" athletes with natural and physical advantages. *Real* Indiana basketball, according to high school coach Gene Miller, is not about *those* types of players: "No superstars, nobody who made an all-star team. It's what Indiana basketball is all about." (Gildea, 1997, p. 52). Consequently, today's small-town, rural student-athletes continue to be produced as true embodiments of a 'hoosier' eth(n)ic...only today, they are without

⁶⁶ These celebrity-symbols of the past will be discussed in more detail in later sections of the paper. However, at this point in time, it is worthwhile to note that all of them are white males from small-town, rural Indiana – and are consistently called upon in literature (Feinstein, 1986; Gildea, 1997; Hoose, 1995; Honeywell, 1997; Wertheim, 2005) and by interviewees as "pure" or "authentic" 'hoosiers' on the hardwood.

a chance to *perform* and *legitimize* the Conservative belief that “hard work” can prevail to overcome all odds.

In that respect, Milan’s memorialized significance is ‘hoosier’ basketball’s equivalent to the American dream. As ‘hoosiers’ want to believe in their own individual merits and the value of a strong work ethic (i.e. articulating a Conservative philosophy that falls in line with neoliberal individualism), many do not want to be thought of as victims who require assistance from the hand of government – or in this case, the IHSAA. The notion that class basketball provides small towns with an equal chance to win the state championship fundamentally stands in opposition to the values and beliefs many ‘hoosiers’ hold close their hearts. Not surprisingly, Martinsville interviewees overwhelmingly made sense of the “plight” of class basketball by ascribing blame to progressive politics...threatening ‘hoosier’ practices, values, and beliefs. As Bill said:

It is part of a progressive philosophy that is represented in much of our liberal philosophy in the country. And that is, let everybody win. Or let, you know, “don’t tell Johnny – don’t give him an F” – you know, or “don’t do anything to maybe embarrass him.” So their theory was it gives more schools the opportunity to be a champion (Personal Interview).

Gary expressed a similar viewpoint:

I think it’s because they wanted more kids to be successful. They wanted more trophies. They said: “Well, there’s so many schools – even if just one small school won – what about the rest of us? We never have a chance” – and that’s true. I mean, there are schools that never won a sectional. But that was part of the mystique. That’s part of one year that they ever did that

– everybody remembers that year. I mean, that’s something that you hold dear to you and they’ve taken that away...So you play Eminence and if Eminence beats you – that’s like them winning the state championship (Personal Interview).

The reasons for class basketball are complex and multitudinous. It is beyond the realm of this paper to try and provide a comprehensive overview for what they are, what they mean, and how they affect Indiana’s basketball landscape. Nevertheless, it is significant that most white interviewees followed Bill and Gary’s thinking to describe their understanding of class basketball. By drawing attention to, and castigating the underlying “progressive” ambience of class basketball, ‘hoosiers’ assume an equally political stance meant to articulate their own white, individualist selves. Harold explained as much:

Does that mean that the young man from Eminence high school can’t compete for that same job out here as a person from Martinsville, South Bend Central, or Indianapolis Ben Davis? He might have to work a little bit harder to get it; but he can still compete for it (Personal Interview).

Importantly, these interviewees also claim to speak on behalf of the experiences of those small schools most affected by class basketball. Gary, for instance, alludes to the small-town school of Eminence, asserting that it didn’t matter to them that they couldn’t advance far in the tournament under a single-class system. This remembering is once again, inherently flawed and assumes a position of power (i.e. speaking on behalf of others). After the 1996 vote to institute a class-system, James Frazier (Eminence’s athletic director) said: “Obviously we’re pleased. That’s how we wanted it to go all along. For the size of our school, I think it will benefit us. We were wanting it all along

for the sake of the school” (Crone, 1996). Moreover, a total of eight of the seventeen votes (on the IHSAA Executive Committee responsible for approving / disapproving the class system) in favour of a class system came from schools with less than 600 students (Tuley, 1996). Clearly, it *did* matter to these schools that they were not winning, as the pressure of Milan’s ghost weighed down on their shoulders. However, that is not to say their repudiation of a single class basketball tournament was made from an orientation rooted in progressive politics. Nor did it signal a turn from one’s own ‘hoosier’ identity and the meanings inscribed therein. Instead, for many small town schools it may have represented the opportunity to reclaim ‘hoosier basketball’ from what had become a black and urban game (Paino, 2001), to what once existed as an innocent, small-town, rural affair. As Gary Donna (publisher of Indiana high school basketball’s longstanding magazine, *Hoosier Basketball*) suggests:

“No one writes about it, but there is a huge racial angle to the story.

Basically, these small white schools wanted a way to be winners again.

They figured the black schools are all the big 4A schools so they wouldn’t have to face them.” (Wertheim, 2005, pp. 170-171).

Once more, there are multiple reasons behind the shift to a multi-class basketball tournament. Yet, Donna is not alone in his assessment. Many of the non-white participants I spoke with shared a similar belief. Nonetheless, the meanings that ‘hoosiers’ and ‘non-hoosiers’ ascribe to class basketball underscore the degree to which a particular ‘hoosier’ eth(n)ic (i.e. whiteness and a ‘hoosier’ work ethic) remains deeply embedded within the game itself.

Moral Protectors of Basketball and the Hoosier Eth(n)ic

The ‘hoosier’ eth(n)ic I refer to is meant to connote more than just an apparent work ethic. In addition, commentators (Beck, 2003; Wertheim, 2005) and interviewees alike allude to a hypermoral landscape through which ‘hoosier basketball’ derives much of its cultural significance. Underneath Giroux’s (1997) “new cartography of race” which seeks to renegotiate violent histories into more innocent depictions of whiteness, today’s game – with its hypervisible black population (particularly at the professional level) – is constructed as having compromised the “pure” values of ‘hoosier basketball’ (Wertheim, 2005). Underneath this discursive landscape, white ‘hoosiers’ come to learn of themselves as moral protectors of the game *and* the small-town, neo-Conservative, Christian, rural values upon which their identity rests.

One can’t help but notice the ubiquitous presence of John Wooden as they travel throughout Martinsville, IN. The high school gymnasium is named after him; there are various memorials dedicated to him inside the school; and his picture can even be seen in stores throughout the downtown core. It is almost certain that every child growing up in Martinsville learns about John Wooden (and many more throughout other parts of Indiana), as Sara (a high school student) noted: “Growing up in Martinsville, we learned a lot about John Wooden and stuff at a young age. And I guess we just grew up with the knowledge about him” (Personal Interview). A Martinsville native who led his town to state championships in 1924 and 1927, Wooden maintains celebrity status in his hometown of roughly 15,000 people. Perhaps most famous for his UCLA coaching days (winning ten national championships), the Martinsville community remembers Wooden for more than his successes on the court. In particular, Wooden’s “spiritual” and moral

significance are often called upon by Martinsville citizens to separate him from other legendary basketball names.

In my interview with Bill, it quickly became evident that Wooden was more than just a successful basketball player/coach. Bill went so far as to recite pieces of Biblical scripture that had apparently been favourite passages of Wooden's, and had also written down various poems and mottos that were either created by, or highly revered by Wooden. For Bill (and others), Wooden was not just a winner – but someone who won the *right* way. Moreover, it was precisely because of the Christian values learned in small-town Martinsville (or to be more precise, the outlying town of Centerton) that Wooden became so successful in life.⁶⁷ Harold had the following to say:

I've told a number of people this, and I'm not the only one who has thought this. You take 1964 – the twelve years that he won the ten national championships. What was going on in southern California at that time? You had the Watts riots; you had this; you had the protestors; I mean John Wooden stuck to his principles that he learned right up here in Centerton, Indiana on the farm. He didn't waver. This is the way it is. You do it my way, or we don't need you we'll find somebody to take your place. And to me, that's probably as remarkable a testimony to the type of man he was. His principles were set. He wasn't going to change his principles to accommodate superstars, whoever (Personal Interview).

In this revealing quote, it is clear that Wooden's function in the 'hoosier' memory is one that legitimizes a deeper set of identity politics rooted in small-town, Conservative, and

⁶⁷ Interestingly, Bill often singled out Wooden's father as the man responsible for instilling these values. I got the sense that Bill was articulating a strong belief in the nuclear family (and the presence of a father figure) as much as he was a Christian morality.

Christian values. As Harold assumes, the ‘hoosier’ principles embodied by Wooden are what kept him stabilized during the most difficult and socially divisive of times.

Surreptitiously, Harold also infers that Wooden’s values were *right*; while incompatible beliefs (embodied in, once again, the language of the “superstar”) were not tolerated. To be successful, then, is to commit oneself to their ‘hoosier’ foundation – and *know* with unwavering faith that these principles are what constitute as being right.

I want to be careful so as not to suggest that John Wooden was an intolerant, fractious or polarizing human being.⁶⁸ In fact, Wooden sought to promote racial tolerance both on and off the court at a time when some basketball teams were still accustomed to playing only one or two black student-athletes at a time. Furthermore, his players seem to have thoroughly enjoyed playing at UCLA underneath his tutelage and guidance...many forging lasting and meaningful relationships with him until he passed away in 2010.

However, as Wooden is memorialized as one of Indiana basketball’s authentic celebrity-

⁶⁸ These labels might best be reserved for Indiana University coach Bob Knight. Like Wooden, Knight is remembered for his uncompromising and unwavering dedication to ‘hoosier’ principles. In speaking with the elderly Emily, she noted: “I know Bobby Knight stirred up a lot of hoosier emotions in people” (Personal Interview). Today, one is not entirely sure if those ‘hoosier emotions’ are completely gone. Bob Knight memorabilia continues to be sold and purchased throughout all parts of Indiana (oftentimes, the pictures that are seen are ones of him passionately yelling, or throwing his chair across the gymnasium floor). During the introduction video of the Indiana University men’s game I attended, a picture of Bob Knight flashed across the jumbotron eliciting a raucous roar of support from the crowd. Asked whether Indiana fans would welcome Bob Knight back to the school, Gary passionately responded: “Yes! We’d embrace him back in a minute...People here would take him back in the blink of an eye. With no reservations. Unconditional – take him back in a minute. I know they would” (Personal Interview). Although many continue to hold Knight in high regard and long for his return to Indiana, others are less enthusiastic. Some people I spoke to suggested that Knight’s cursing and militaristic treatment of players were contradictory to the principles of Indiana basketball. Yet, these ideas were most commonly shared by older generations who were more comfortable with John Wooden’s quiet (or what was described as “saintly”) demeanor; or racial minorities who were uncomfortable with Knight’s whiteness and/or masculinity. Nonetheless, Bob Knight is remembered for his ability to create a sameness that fell in line with the ‘hoosier’ consensus, as Gary said: “Bobby Knight – you had your hair cut, facial hair...you tucked your shirt in. Everybody looked the same; everybody wore their socks the same. And that’s the way you were” (Personal Interview). Given that his rosters were disproportionately white, Knight’s vision of “sameness” reaffirmed the ‘hoosier’ belief in a pure, white, Christian and Conservative body reminiscent of Indiana’s past. And, as Knight came to embody a white patriarchal masculinity himself, some ‘hoosiers’ saw (and continue to see) him as the authentic representation of a ‘hoosier’ body, as Henry noted: “...Rugged, masculine, winner, national champion...all of those things – he had the family thing [too]” (Personal Interview).

symbols, his contemporary significance becomes constructed by regulatory ‘hoosier’ bodies underneath the racialized and normalizing landscape of ‘hoosier basketball’. In other words, Wooden’s commitment to small-town, Christian ‘hoosier’ values combined with his expectation that players discipline themselves according to these principles represents the successful transmission of ‘hoosier’ power. Players were given the choice to conform to the “right” way; or to reject these values and risk being labelled an ‘outsider’. Even more impressive for Harold is the fact that Wooden was able to accomplish such a feat during the political unrest of the civil rights movement. Wooden’s success (ten national championships) has therefore been memorialized as the success of ‘hoosier’ values, which “began with a belief in the wholesomeness as well as the inherent superiority of Indiana basketball” (Beck, 2003, p. 80). The revolutionary potential marked by the civil rights era is, unfortunately, located outside this symbolic territory and placed in direct opposition to it.

The apparent wholesomeness of Indiana basketball has been an embedded part of the sporting culture since its rise to popularity. As Paino (2001) describes, this “purity” was synonymously linked to the racial politics of the time: “Especially back in the 1910s and 20s Indiana high school basketball, like the Klan, culturally expressed racist and nativist ideology. The values displayed by the local team were often *exclusively* associated with the state’s white, Protestant, and native-born culture” (p. 68; emphasis in original). Today, ‘hoosiers’ like Gary continue to subject themselves to this notion of a pure aesthetic that is both learned and embodied on the basketball court:

Meeting those requirements [outlined by your coach] and doing it the right way and putting yourself in a good light – that’s what Indiana basketball is

all about. It's *pure*. It's supposed to be pure. And there's so many tattoos...all of these things today and that's not pure (Personal Interview).

As such, this purity is one that disavows social difference on the most corporeal of levels, but more symbolically understands difference as a moral threat to the normalized/normalizing 'hoosier' centre. Tattoos, for example, act as a signifier of difference through which deeper meanings are affixed to the 'non-hoosier' and 'hoosier' body alike.

I asked Martinsville participants who came to mind when they thought of the prototypical 'hoosier' body. I did not restrict their answers to the realm of basketball, yet symbolically, each of them answered by providing names from Indiana's high school basketball history. Damon Bailey and Steve Alford were mentioned most often, followed by Rick Mount, Bobby Plump, John Wooden, and Larry Bird. As 'hoosiers' want to see their own small-town, Christian bodies as "pure", they look to the hypermoral landscape of basketball. Inevitably, the celebrity-symbols they call upon to represent authentic 'hoosiness' do not pose any visible difference(s) to the invisible 'hoosier' centre: they are all white males who grew up in small-town, rural parts of Indiana from working class backgrounds. However, those who exist outside this corporealized sameness are produced as potential threats to the "purity" and moral righteousness reserved for 'hoosier' bodies.⁶⁹ This narrative of moral panic unfolds throughout Wertheim's (2005) book entitled *Transition Game: How Hoosiers Went Hip Hop*, where he refers to the predominantly black NBA to illustrate what he perceives as a threat to the established "good" and "decency" of 'hoosier basketball'. He castigates the NBA for exuding a

⁶⁹ Perhaps this is why the boys on Martinsville's high school varsity team looked very similar in appearance: a collection of all-white bodies, with short haircuts and no tattoos.

“poverty of morals” (p. 152), and depicts a league where players are “beating their spouses...brandishing guns, or birthing children they [have] no intention of ever seeing again” (p. 151).

In fact, interviewees performed their ‘hoosiness’ by demonizing and dissociating with the “type” of basketball (and players) found in the NBA.⁷⁰ The Indiana Pacers professional basketball franchise was famously involved in the 2004 brawl (posthumously referred to as the “Malice at the Palace”) that saw athletes from the Pacers and fans of the Detroit Pistons engage in violent physical confrontation. Moreover, between 2006 and 2008, seven different players from the team were implicated in a number of off-court events that further sparked the anxieties of those within and outside the organization.⁷¹ Public opinion polls revealed that the majority of Indianan citizens had formulated an unfavourable opinion of the team by 2007 (also reflected in declining attendance rates), and were discouraged by the perceived lack of character or morals exuded by athletes (Lee, 2008). Reflecting back on this history, Gary explained that he and his fellow ‘hoosiers’ were uncomfortable with some of the Pacers’s athletes before they were even accused and/or charged with any wrongdoing.⁷²

⁷⁰ The reader might notice that I have focused my attention on high school basketball to analyze the cultural significance of basketball in Indiana. This is because it is more than just the sport of basketball that has symbolic meaning for Indianans. Rather, it is the sport played *their* way – found through the Indiana high school basketball tournament.

⁷¹ Brought under scrutiny for their possession and/or use of marijuana, David Harrison and Shawne Williams’s names were cast upon the public realm. Harrison was caught violating the NBA’s drug policy, while Williams was pulled over for “driving infractions” leading police officers to eventually find the substance in his car. Shawne Williams’s name was, once again, brought forth to the public as he housed a childhood friend who was suspected of murder. Similarly, an alleged rape took place in the home of Marquis Daniels during a small party, where he was not found to be involved. Jamaal Tinsley was shot at, and chased down, in his vehicle after leaving a night club on one occasion; and also involved in a separate incident along with Daniels, Stephen Jackson, and Jimmy Hunter (whereby a car purposely struck Jackson in the parking lot of a different establishment). Lastly, an alleged altercation took place at a third night club, after a man attempted to steal the coats belonging to Tinsley, Daniels, and Keith McLeod.

⁷² It is important to remember that many were merely accused and never charged. However, over time this became less important for the media in their criminalizing discourse.

When they [Indiana Pacers] brought in some of the players – they brought in Artest and *some of these kinds* – everybody was saying “what are they doing there? why?” Because, we knew their history, We knew what kind of player they were and it didn’t fit the mould of what that purist, Indiana basketball was all about (Personal Interview; emphasis added).

Gary’s quote is significant for a number of different reasons. Firstly, his thinking reaffirms the argument put forth by de B’béri and Hogarth (2009) that “the athletic black body in the eyes of white America’s spectatorship has a meaning fixed upon it through the repetition and reiteration of symbols and signs that have articulated its norms and fixed upon a particular set of meaning” (p. 94). The fact that Gary and others *knew* the body of Ron Artest “and some of these kinds” before they were accused of any wrongdoing exemplifies a white epistemology that seeks to define and know the Other; in this case, black men from poor, innercity backgrounds who display hip hop signifiers on and through the body. Secondly, it is apparent through Gary’s racially coded language (i.e. “some of these kinds”) that poor, black, hip-hop identifying men from America’s innercities are lumped into a monolithic category of “danger”. Reflecting these anxieties, people’s critiques were not limited to just the Pacers but the entire NBA as a whole. Oftentimes, interviewees and people I spoke to in casual conversations would use the word “thug” to describe the contemporary NBA player. One white, middle-aged man I spoke with in an Indianapolis sports collectible store plainly said: “The thing about the NBA now is it’s all just a bunch of thugs. That’s all it is – thugs.” My interview with Harold revealed a similar level of contempt for these professional athletes:

They [the Pacers] had some thugs on the team [laughs]. Excuse me, Scott.
Call it what it is – they’re thugs. And unfortunately you’re seeing a lot of
NBA players with that mentality. Maybe they’re going back to the way
they were raised; they were raised in that environment and they just
it’s...that’s the way it’s supposed to be (Personal Interview).

The NBA is therefore constructed as different from ‘hoosier basketball’, in part, due to its perceived problem with criminal behaviour. Leonard (2006b) illuminates the role played by the media in producing this criminalized portrait, suggesting that racialized narratives are commonly deployed by writers and readers to make sense of the “immoral” landscape of professional basketball.

However, there is something deeper at work as well. Remembering that basketball acts as a medium through which ‘hoosiers’ understand their cultural identity, the demonization (and subsequent dissociation) of/from the NBA symbolically allows one to perform an alternatively “pure” and “righteous” identity rooted in small-town, Christian values. To refer back to Gary’s words, the “types” of players found in the NBA do not adhere to “the mould of what that purist, Indiana basketball [is] all about.” Subsequently, the celebrity-symbols of Indiana’s *real* basketball culture (as defined by whiteness: e.g. Damon Bailey, Steve Alford, Rick Mount, John Wooden, etc.) are brought forth in the ‘hoosier’ memory to legitimize the moral superiority of ‘hoosier basketball’. There are no “thug” problems existing as part of this romanticized history; which is meant to suggest that the small-town, Conservative and Christian values upon which the sporting culture is based do not lead to such deviant behaviour. The problems within the NBA, however, are attributed to a dangerous black hip-hop and/or gangster culture (Leonard, 2006b). Sensing

these narratives, Dave (a Martinsville native in his late twenties or early thirties) portrayed a great deal of hesitancy to link his identity with the threatening bodies of the NBA, since they could potentially compromise the moral legitimacy attached to his ‘hoosier’ body:

Well, there’s some thuggery going on there...I mean, you’ve got thugs and people who can’t win basketball games and people who are getting into personal trouble representing you – you know so there might be resentment or at least not any particular sense of loyalty or support there. You don’t want people like that representing you. You like people like Peyton Manning representing you (Personal Interview).

Instead, Dave relies on the National Football League (NFL) Indianapolis Colts quarterback, Peyton Manning, to represent the idealized portrait of a professional athlete.⁷³ Manning’s white masculine body and small-town rural, Southern, Conservative, and Christian upbringing locates him as “safe” underneath the ‘hoosier’ umbrella.

As an organization, the Indiana Pacers even went so far as to rely upon the institutional force of ‘hoosier basketball’ to reconstruct their image. Trading or waiving the “criminal” players or “thugs” from the team (all of whom were black), the 2008-2009 Pacers *looked* much different by way of their racial composition. Between the years 2006 to 2009, the number of white, American-born players on the team jumped from one to six. Larry Bird (a symbolic ‘hoosier’ figure) was promoted to President of Basketball Operations and made the sole decision maker for all matters related to player personnel.

⁷³ In my interview with Angela, she expressed the belief that Peyton Manning functions as a “great white hope” for some of Indiana’s small-town, Conservative, white populace who long for a mythical past. However, by following up her claim with “he has earned that, because...he’s a hell of an athlete, and he appears to be a really nice guy” (Personal Interview) she demonstrated a form of panoptic power, so as not to disrupt the invisible ‘hoosier’ centre.

Pacers team owner, Herb Simon, relied upon Bird's symbolic significance as a legitimate 'hoosier' body to make appropriate 'hoosier' decisions, announcing: "We couldn't be more enthused about Larry's passion for the game, *his understanding of what our fans want* and his experience as a player, coach and president" (Walsh will not return to Pacers, 2008; emphasis added). It was clear that the Pacers had dedicated themselves to the principles of 'hoosier basketball'. Moreover, their 2008-2009 marketing campaign (synchronously paired with a "whiter" roster) sought to articulate both the 'hoosier' work ethic and style embodied in the new players, "emphasizing the *character* and *determination of team members* [and] the core values of basketball in Indiana: *hustle and hard work by team players*" (Lee, 2008, ¶2, 41). Even the stadium aesthetics were changed to "harken back to Indiana's high school basketball glory days" (Lee, 2008, ¶3), reflected through an adjustment in music (e.g. the Pacers's Disc Jockey was replaced by a more "traditional" brass pep band) among other things. Conflating to produce an "authentic" 'hoosier' image, all of these organizational strategies relied upon the "ghost" (Abdel-Shehid, 2005) of the Pacers's criminalized, black, hip-hop identifying "past" so as to create the necessary *difference* for people to understand the "new" Pacers as 'hoosiers'. With the hope of regaining fan support, the organization constructed itself as protecting the symbolic ideological value of 'hoosier basketball'; the "pure" origins of the sport (which are not so innocent) that have since been compromised in the 21st century; and the Indiana community at large from a threatening, inner city, black, male presence and hip hop culture. Whereas the NBA has continued to associate its image with hip hop culture for commercial reasons (McDonald & Togliola, 2010), the Indiana Pacers have taken the opposite approach – distancing themselves from hip hop's dangerous signifiers (and

bodies), and replacing them with “safe” and culturally meaningful symbols (and bodies) of “Hoosier basketball”. In this respect, the Indiana Pacers have sought to distinguish themselves apart from the NBA altogether, as a sort of moral sanctuary that stands up to the league’s “poverty of morals” (Wertheim, 2005, p. 152).

Hoosier Patriotism and Small-Town Pride

Regardless of the Pacers’s best efforts, ‘hoosier basketball’ remains deeply rooted in something more indigenous, nostalgic, and unique to Indiana (i.e. the high school tournament) than the commercialized – and what Foer (2004) might argue “globalized” – character of professional sport. Asked to make sense of the fact that a self-proclaimed “basketball state” such as Indiana ranked amongst the NBA’s worst in attendance rates, Mike offered a critical reading grounded in the underlying racialization of ‘hoosier basketball’:

For a while there, I would say we [the Pacers] were just not supported by the ‘hoosiers’! ‘Hoosiers’ didn’t care for Pacers because Pacers were – they all wanted to be Kobe Bryant and LeBron James – they wanted to be showey – didn’t care about fundamentals – didn’t care about assists – or they wanted behind the back pass and 360 dunks, and they wanted to shoot threes all the time and they were black. And the normal ‘hoosier’ just doesn’t care for that...and then the Detroit riot just bunked that stereotype right up – the angry black man (Personal Interview).

Although it is difficult to tell through the transcript, Mike’s characterization of an “apathetic” NBA athlete does not reflect his own beliefs, but rather his interpretation of

the white ‘hoosier’ perspective.⁷⁴ Referencing an apparent *difference* in style and eth(n)ic compared to the idealized portrait of ‘hoosier basketball’, Mike’s critical reading is important in that it illustrates how the cultural significance of basketball is contingent upon the bodies and symbols inscribed *therein*; not the sport itself.

To be sure, the lack of appeal some ‘hoosiers’ have for the NBA and Pacers cannot be understood from any one explanation, as it represents the complex coalescence of a number of different intervening factors (e.g. lack of discretionary funds in a difficult economy; a losing team; a small market with two professional sports franchises; competing against the more successful Indianapolis Colts for people’s discretionary income, etc.).⁷⁵ However, it became clear through participant interviews that some people not only stopped supporting the NBA, but went further by rejecting and denigrating the league and athletes altogether. Recognizing the deeper cultural politics rooted in Indiana basketball (i.e. seeing one’s own ‘hoosier’ body and community through the sport), it is important not to naturalize or depoliticize this sporting culture as many interviewees did – suggesting that the Pacers could regain support if they “just began winning”. Such explanations do not take into account the much deeper and complex issue of ‘hoosiers’ producing the entire NBA as a criminalized realm of potential danger. Nor do they acknowledge the unwavering support and loyalty exuded by ‘hoosiers’ across rural parts of the state; many of whom descend upon the local high school gymnasium to cheer on

⁷⁴ In a sense, these are his own beliefs – in that they illuminate his understanding of white ‘hoosier’ body politics rooted in his own experiences as a non-white ‘outsider’. The only basketball Mike enjoyed watching was NBA basketball, and the tone he used during this part of our conversation suggested that he was attempting to speak through a world view that was not his own.

⁷⁵ Throughout much of the 90s, the Pacers received tremendous support. However, this support came before the years of an apparent transformation away from a depoliticized, corporatized and “safe” blackness (embodied in the likes of Michael Jordan) (McDonald, 1996) to a dangerous and threatening black, hip-hop culture (represented through the bodies of athletes such as Allen Iverson) (Brown, 2005).

their boys and girls each year, regardless of whether they produce winning or losing teams.

This is the root of ‘hoosier’ patriotism; or small-town pride. For some ‘hoosiers’, high school basketball acts as the common ground through which an imagined community can congregate, celebrate, and perform a historicized cultural identity. However, as has been mentioned, this practice emerged from a racially tense 1920s era. As Martin (1998) elaborates:

While the Klan pageantry relished by so many Indiana residents has (fortunately) fallen into disrepute, the ritual, spectacle, and ceremonial aspects of school sports and associated fan activity that evolved so rapidly in the 1920s have proved enduring, suggesting that such spectacle serves a profound need for social interaction and for the celebration of a sense of community in which “internal” conflict can be at least temporarily submerged, as ranks are closed against the “external” enemy (p. 142).

Calling upon the terminology used by Putnam (2000) in his sociological analysis of American communities, Paino (2001) suggests that Indiana’s high school basketball culture – situated underneath this sociopolitical context – blurred the lines between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital. For Putnam (2000), “bonding” social capital is when communities look inwards to define themselves according to exclusive traits based on race, ethnicity, religion, politics, class, etc. “Bridging”, however, looks to be more inclusive by incorporating people from diverse social groups. As Paino (2001) alludes to the context underneath which Indiana basketball rose in popularity: “At a time when well

over 90% of the state's population was white, native born, and Protestant, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine where the bonding ends and the bridging begins".

Today, the state of Indiana remains overwhelmingly white,⁷⁶ with the majority of this population residing in small-town rural or suburban centres. And, as "little pockets of intact Hoosier Hysteria [continue to exist], where the mania for high school basketball has hardly fallen off at all" (Lawrence, 2001, p. xix), one can't help but acknowledge the underlying racial politics that continue to persist as part of these "bonding" communities. Not only do these high school student athletes play for their school, but also their community at large – in front of hundreds and sometimes thousands of white bodies longing to perform their 'hoosier' selves. It is precisely this "blurring of lines between ballteam and town" (Lawrence, 2001, p. xi) that continue to afford the high school game with its symbolic significance. Moreover, as these small-town rural centres come to see themselves as embodying and defending an authentic 'hoosier' corporeality in the twenty first century, they must overcome the threat of 'non-hoosiers'.

By now, it should be evident that 'non-hoosiers' are distinctly racialized (despite being referred to through racially coded language) and marked outside Indiana's normative cultural and political landscape. As small-town populations define and commemorate the celebrity-symbols of "pure" 'hoosierness' through images of Damon Bailey, Steve Alford, Rick Mount, Bobby Plump, Larry Bird, John Wooden, etc. non-white citizens are purposely meant to experience themselves as "other" or "outsider" to the imagined 'hoosier' community. Newman (2010) elaborates by noting:

...celebrities are semiotic systems layered with cultural meanings to be actively decoded and interpreted by audience members. In this way, the

⁷⁶ According to the 2010 census, 84.3% of the state's total population identifies as white.

celebrity body [re]presents a new system of power-knowledge – whereby discursive encoding and meaning-making processes formulate and engage the cultural imaginaries that hold sway over the lived experience (p. 157-158).

The celebrities of ‘hoosier basketball’ undoubtedly come to be constructed as small-town heroes.⁷⁷ Moreover, it is through their ability to represent and succeed by using the core values of small-town America that ‘hoosiers’ come to politicize the basketball environment, as Henry noted: “Something about those small town values coming through and leading to success. And, you know, leading a relatively clean life” (Personal Interview). Thus, Newman’s (2010) assessment that these celebrities come to act as systems of power-knowledge seems vividly accurate for our understanding of ‘hoosier basketball’. As each of these white men from rural small-towns in Indiana are inscribed with the discursive meanings attached to a ‘hoosier eth(n)ic’, they represent the image of sameness upon which every Indiana citizen must strive to achieve. Gildea’s (1997) portrait of Damon Bailey serves to reinforce this point: “He was pure Hoosier, modest and mannerly. Young boys modeled their lives on him, and because of him, men wished they could relive theirs” (p. 47).

Indiana’s high school basketball environment, therefore acts as a location through which ‘hoosiers’ can celebrate, perform, and be proud of their small-town values and upbringing. There is nothing wrong with such a position per se. However, as these small-towns come to be disproportionately (and sometimes exclusively) associated with white bodies, one’s pride in the innocent small-town lifestyle becomes a more connotative pride in the symbolic meanings attached to whiteness. In 1998, the Martinsville High School

⁷⁷ In fact, Honeywell’s (1997) book is entitled just that: *Bobby Plump: Last of the small town heroes*.

boys basketball team became one such site for the expression of whiteness. As a racially integrated team from Bloomington, IN unloaded from their team bus to enter Martinsville's school, they were welcomed by a group of students who shouted racial epithets at the players. The comments continued throughout the course of the game (leading to a very tense and physical on-court product), prompting the principal of Bloomington North to file an official complaint with the IHSAA in the days that followed. Martinsville was eventually reprimanded by the league, and a national media circus ensued – much to the chagrin of local residents who were unaccustomed to critically thinking about their community.

Rather than use the incident as an opportunity to reflect upon the way racism operates in all-white towns and potentially manifests within a jingoistic and hypercompetitive sporting culture, the Martinsville community defended their 'hoosier' bodies and stood up for their "innocent" and "friendly" town. In the months that followed, the local newspaper was dominated by commentary from columnists and citizens (writing into the opinion pages) alike, who mostly sought to defend the actions of the boy's basketball team.⁷⁸ Several important narratives emerged. Firstly, many citizens of Martinsville demanded that "evidence" be provided so as to prove that acts of racism *actually* occurred. Apparently, the testimonials of players, coaches, and fans from Bloomington North was not enough, leading to a series of "disproving" narratives from Martinsville "witnesses" who were in attendance (Nunn, 1998d). Additionally, the front page of the February 12, 1998 *Martinsville Reporter*, featured a story on one of Martinsville's only black residents to proclaim that racism doesn't exist in the town

⁷⁸ Based upon my analysis, there were a select few individuals who wrote into the paper to suggest a critical viewpoint; however, the overwhelming majority of writing was focused on defending the students of Martinsville High School, and protecting the reputation of Martinsville's community.

(May, 1998). Over ten years later, the interviewees I spoke to still suggested that proof was needed to confirm the legitimacy of the “allegations”. As Emily said:

The principal of [Bloomington] North told Conference Indiana – she just took a lot of statements from people and told Conference Indiana this is what happened. And they believed it. Didn’t even listen to anything Martinsville said. The truth of the matter was, she wasn’t even there. She didn’t see it. I saw it! I know what happened! (Personal Interview).⁷⁹

For Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumanchery-Luik (2004), this obsessive desire for proof is symptomatic of a white supremacist culture that seeks to define “what” racism is, by requiring that racism be both “perceptible and understandable” (p. 8) to the privileged.

Secondly, it became popular for Martinsville citizens to assume the role of victim in the months following the incident:

Actually, I believe that we are suffering from racial discrimination ourselves. We are stereotyped, and although our townspeople and students may do the same things as other schools and towns, they are looked at in a different light because of the image that has been carried through the generations (Nunn, 1998a).

Illustrating a desire to separate the present from the past⁸⁰ (i.e. a racist history that must be negotiated in *any* Indiana small-town), many of the columns and editorials relied on a

⁷⁹ Emily was quite upset with the fact that I even broached the difficult subject of racism in our interview. When I defended myself by saying “it’s a part of the history”, she responded “Well, it’s a bad part of the history; and it should never have happened. I mean, there shouldn’t ever have been a big ‘to-do’ over that” (Personal Interview). Not only do residents such as Emily still believe they were “wronged”; but they seek to ignore or repress this part of history from their memory so as to preserve the positive and proud community-image they were brought up to believe in.

⁸⁰ Events such as the 1968 murder of Carol Jenkins (a black woman selling books door to door), and/or KKK rallies that took place within the city were positioned as “history”. The more recent occurrence *just*

discourse of whiteness to position their own white bodies as under attack by a liberal agenda.

Thirdly, it was common to read antiquated and overly-individualized understandings of racism. For example, a headline on the front page of the February 13, 1998 edition of the *Martinsville Reporter* read: “It’s official! KKK Grand Dragon says there are no members in Martinsville” (Nunn, 1998c). Apparently, only those who belonged to right wing extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan could be considered racist according to the logic. Also, various speakers loathed the fact that everyone had to suffer the consequences of being labelled racist for the actions of “just a few”. These individualized readings of racism seriously distort its institutionalized, systemic, and cultural impact, moulding it into an overly-simplified concept that simply occurs out of one’s own personal biases:

We must pull ourselves together because the others won’t change. The first thing is, if you aren’t racist, keep telling yourself you aren’t. If you are racist, you won’t do it. Either way, you might want to attend any group sessions and/or seminars that will be coming up (Gray, 1998).

Additionally, attempts were made to devalue the significance of racism and its impact on those affected by it. A headline on the front page of the February 11, 1998 read: “Deaths are more serious tragedies” (Nunn, 1998b) and relied upon the deaths of two teenage girls in a car accident to put racism “into perspective”. Speaking from a position of white privilege, Nunn (1998b) suggests: “We can be thankful that no one has suffered serious bodily injury over our problems” (p. A1).

one year prior to the basketball incident saw a nearly identical situation unfold at a Martinsville middle school football contest. This was almost completely ignored by commentators.

Lastly, illustrating the way people come to perform their ‘hoosier’ bodies through high school basketball, a large percentage of columnists and editorials spoke to the urgent need to support the MHS boys’ basketball team *even more* than what was normal before the incident; to have pride in one’s small-town upbringing, and to not be ashamed of living in a predominantly white town. Harold remembered that the community answered the call, and rallied around the team after the “alleged” incident (Personal Interview); thereby leaving behind an interesting legacy of whiteness that continues to exist today.

Examining copies of the *Martinsville Reporter* in the years prior to the 1998 incident between MHS and Bloomington North articulates the degree to which racism is normalized in the everyday public discourse of an all-white ‘hoosier’ town. In an editorial entitled “Regarding Slavery” appearing in the January 6, 1998 edition of the paper, the writer posits that:

The ironical result of the slaves landing in the US was that blacks had been so terribly mistreated by their own race and the Arabs that when they finally landed on a plantation, where they were fed, given raggedy clothes, worked only in the daylight hours, many thought they were truly blessed and whole-heartedly accepted their lot, thanking God and singing gospel songs even worshipping their masters (Alexander, 1998).

Even after the basketball incident had taken place, and in the midst of dialogue seeking to prove Martinsville’s “anti-racist” image, editorials such as these appeared:

What motivates the NAACP and its entourage is as old as the Bible. It’s called covetousness or envy. Simply put, the Negro wants (but can never have) what the Caucasian has. Since he can’t have it, the Negro and his

manipulators are hell-bent to destroy it through the process of integration (Spurgeon, 1998).

The fact that such writings were deemed acceptable by the newspaper editorial staff demonstrates the degree to which whiteness pervades the public discourse in many of Indiana's small-town, rural centres. However, as one is taught to be "proud" of their community and the 'hoosier' values upon which they stand up for, a critical consciousness becomes almost non-existent. Unfortunately, Indiana's basketball culture only seems to reinforce and make invisible this perpetual cycle of a performed and simultaneously defended whiteness.

Thus, to summarize chapter five, Indiana's basketball culture plays an integral role in reinforcing many of the same historical and political meanings attached to the 'hoosier' body. Through the romanticization of an innocent bygone era of 'hoosier basketball', the early years leading up to the formal integration of high school basketball are (mis)remembered as being "pure". Meanwhile, those who were excluded from this monolithic sporting culture are memorialized outside that "purity". Whiteness is therefore obscured as a pristine and righteous symbol of Indiana's history, and is similarly imbued with neo-Conservative and Christian undertones. In contrast, Otherness becomes reified and demonized on the basis that it poses a significant threat to traditional 'hoosier' culture and/or values (e.g. historically, the dichotomization of the 1954 and 1955 state championships; contemporaneously, the apparent differences between professional and high school basketball). The resulting iconic images of white sporting masculinity are, according to McDonald (2010), meant to "serve as comforting figures amidst the confusion, backlash, and ambiguity brought on by cultural and economic changes" (p.

165). Yet certainly, in an era where basketball is seen to have progressed from its “pure” roots, the figures of Damon Bailey, Steve Alford, Rick Mount, etc. provide a nostalgic alleviation to the “plight” of social difference witnessed in the game (and more generally, Indiana) today. Moreover, small, rural towns such as Martinsville are constructed as fulfilling and/or protecting authentic ‘hoosier’ culture from a dangerous Other. The results of this thinking lead to an almost militaristic patriotism with (as has been demonstrated) unfortunate and racialized circumstances.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Summary

I began this research by asking two separate but interrelated research questions: 1) how does sport (in this case basketball), the nation-state (Indiana), history, and identity ('hoosier') conflate to reproduce racial hierarchies; and 2) what (if any) impact do these racial politics have on people's lives today? The former question can be understood most poignantly through a critical reading of the 1954 state championship (captured in the film *Hoosiers*). Milan's sociocultural significance as an all-white team from small-town, rural Indiana were important traits during a tense racial climate (characterized by the burgeoning civil rights movement); in a state with a long legacy of racism; and in a contested social space (i.e. high school basketball) that historically "belonged" to Indiana's white citizenry in the 1950s. The 1986 film *Hoosiers* erases these important details from history, creating a safely packaged depoliticized / depoliticizing neoliberal space for Indiana's contemporary audience to consume and make sense of their 'hoosier' bodies. That is not to say the embedded racial politics cease to exist in lieu of this cultural revisionism. Rather, basketball is remembered for its ability to produce an "imagined 'hoosier' community" leaving the sport, the state, their histories, and the identity to conjoin and produce normalized, pure or authentic 'hoosier' bodies (insiders) at the expense of different presumably 'non-hoosier' subjects (outsiders).

Subtextually then, race continues to be embedded as part of these 'hoosier' discourses. Those bodies that are memorialized for their ability to represent a "real" form of 'hoosiness' are overwhelmingly white, male, working class, small-town and/or rural (e.g. Damon Bailey, Steve Alford, Rick Mount, Bobby Plump, Larry Bird, John Wooden, etc.), leaving Othered bodies to be remembered as "superstars" or "superb athletes". Of

course, it would be overly simplistic and unfair to suggest that the word ‘hoosier’ is withheld from Othered groups altogether. Within casual conversations, it was not uncommon to hear people list the names of current NBA players with ‘hoosier’ roots (white or black, small-town or big-city, rural or urban, etc.). However, in these instances people did not critically reflect upon the meaning of the state-demonym or basketball’s cultural significance. When asked to do so, both the word and Indiana’s prized sporting culture quickly revealed themselves as monolithic spaces of whiteness.

This of course leads to the second research question: what impact do these racial politics have on people’s lives today? In speaking with non-white participants (many of whom lived in urban centres), there was a clear uneasiness or unwillingness on their part to see themselves as ‘hoosiers’. Many spoke to the concept of ‘hoosiness’ from the third person, in contrast to the first-person subjectivity that white ‘hoosiers’ claimed to speak from. In addition, it was clear (in talking with people such as Mike) that the word carried with it negative connotations rooted in one’s own “racialized” or ‘non-hoosier’ experience (e.g. being meant to feel “different”, demonized, and/or unwanted by a ‘hoosier’ majority). Legislation such as SB 590 only seems to have institutionalized or materialized these beliefs.

Furthermore, basketball serves as an important venue through which racialized “outsiders” to the state are meant to experience themselves as such. Those who were at once excluded from the ‘hoosier’ community (i.e. racialized ‘non-hoosier’ Others) remain so today through a process of memorialization. The symbolic significance of Indiana’s basketball culture is not constructed for those non-white individuals living in Indiana’s biggest cities. Their respective purpose is to merely act as the threatening Other (e.g.

“big-city”; “urban”; “superstar”; NBA) for ‘hoosiers’ to construct their own meaningful white subjectivity; to act as hypervisible and physically superior “Goliaths” that afford ‘hoosiers’ with a “David” or “underdog” persona; and to represent a criminalized or deviant character upon which ‘hoosierness’ claims its moral “purity”. Not only did the 1954 Milan team serve as the inspiration for the film *Hoosiers*, but they were also inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame as soon as the fifty year waiting requirement was met in 2004. The 1955 championship team from Indianapolis’s all-black Crispus Attucks high school, however, had significantly more difficulty in becoming memorialized in the 2005 year, as Keith (who played on the team) recalled:

Keith: They inducted Milan fifty years to the day that they won a championship in 2004. So they had this big to-do and they went up to David Letterman and all that stuff. So the next year somebody said “Is Attucks gonna be here?”, and they said “No – unh unh”. We said, “why not” and they [the Hall of Fame officials] said “they didn’t do nothing extraordinary or nothing” – and we said “What the hell do you mean man! We’re the first all-black team in the country!” ... So they tried to figure out and say that we didn’t do this, and we didn’t do that. We said “Hell, we won more games than Milan did”. Hell we only lost one game – which could have gone either way because of the floor.⁸¹ That was a history making thing – first all-black team in the city – Indianapolis *and* the country!? And so finally they broke down and they inducted us. I don’t know if they didn’t want to but they went on and did.

⁸¹ Keith is referring to the fact that their loss came at the hands of a school who had a pool underneath the gym floor, where the moisture created a dangerously slippery surface that slowed down Crispus Attucks from playing their game.

Scott: Did the second team [the undefeated Crispus Attucks 1956 champions] get inducted?

Keith: Yeah, in 06. They didn't want to but they did (Personal Interview).

Those who regulate and manipulate what constitutes as 'hoosier basketball' are to be carefully scrutinized. The lack of diversity in the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, for instance, is astounding. Its director emeritus consists exclusively of white men (twenty two in total); while twenty of the twenty-one past presidents are white men; and twenty three of the twenty seven board of directors members are white men (Field Notes). It is precisely this white male power structure that continues to nostalgically remember the past by distorting a problematic whiteness into a universalizing and *proud* heritage...one that "all hoosiers" can readily conform to and accept. Amidst these knowledge-power relations, critical voices are disregarded and/or marginalized. For example, the IHSAA presents an annual award for "mental attitude" to one player in each class. Named after the ex-Commissioner Arthur Trester who was responsible for barring all-black schools from the state tournament up to 1942, some black coaches and administrators were critical of the fact that an award of this type could be named after a man who advocated hate and racial intolerance (Rabjohns, 2007). Nonetheless, these black voices went unheard by the 'hoosier' regime as the award continues to exist today.

While the purpose of this thesis was to critically examine Indiana's basketball culture in hopes of understanding the way(s) people learn; make sense of; embody, regulate, and/or contest 'hoosier' whiteness both on and off the basketball court, it is most important to acknowledge that links between the 'hoosier' identity and basketball exist in the first place. People do not learn about what it means to be 'hoosier' *solely*

through basketball; however, its monolithic culture certainly comes to encapsulate, reaffirm, and reproduce the power that historically undergirds ‘hoosier’ bodies. Taken together, language (i.e. ‘hoosier’), history (colonialism, nativism, and racism), and culture (e.g. high school basketball, *Hoosiers*) have each been “claimed” and revised underneath the dominant subjectivity of a ‘hoosier’ populace. Their underlying politics are partitioned or significantly abstracted in the contemporary moment to create an unproblematic, romanticized, and proud small-town, rural, whiteness. Thus, while basketball offers a medium through which ‘hoosiness’ comes to be learned, people’s sensemaking of the sporting culture becomes informed by much broader structures of power that transcend the sport. It is clear that there still exists a strong underlying belief that “real hoosiers” live (and lived) in the state’s predominantly white, rural, small towns as opposed to bigger, urban centres. Many interviewees alluded to this point in their description of the “wholesomeness”, purity, Christian morality, and work ethic evident in these parts of Indiana (and embodied by the celebrity symbols of Indiana’s basketball culture). In contrast, bigger cities were often demonized or criminalized in their portrayal.

Thus, to perform one’s ‘hoosier’ identity is to unfailingly align oneself with Indiana’s small-town, white, and rural centres. It is expected that stories such as the 1954 Milan Miracle and high school “legends” like Bobby Plump, Damon Bailey, and Rick Mount articulate a common shared ‘hoosier’ experience or imagined community – overlooking the divisive racial politics that were responsible for these figures/events’ cultural significance in the first place. Not surprisingly then, race continues its secret existence in the performance of ‘hoosier’ identity politics. Basketball, on its own, falls short from ever articulating ‘hoosiness’. Rather, it is a belief in a particular “brand” or

“style” of basketball (what has heretofore been referred to as ‘hoosier basketball’) that each citizen is expected to appreciate, support, and perform. It is not a celebration of the teams or players themselves, but what they *symbolically represent*; that is, a “pure” or romantic bygone era in Indiana history. As many of Indiana’s white citizens long for this imagined past, they make the implicit assumption that true ‘hoosiness’ has been compromised in the twenty first century. And, in order to police and regulate these symbolic boundaries, Indiana’s big cities, the predominantly black NBA/Indiana Pacers, and illegal immigration (just some of the examples introduced in this thesis) are demonized and/or criminalized for their ‘un-hoosier’ or Othered existence.

I recognize that discussions related to the contestation or resistance of ‘hoosiness’ have been limited throughout the entirety of this thesis. There are multiple reasons for this; some of which I will attempt to outline here. First and foremost, I do not mean to suggest that resistance is futile or non-existent in the “hoosier state”. Borrowing from Foucault, I understand that individuals (as they operate underneath varying relations of power) internalize and employ disciplinary practices that can either reinforce or withstand the objectives of these power relations (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Given the fact that research participants were aware of my interests in “hoosier” and basketball culture, it was not surprising that very few people openly spoke out against ‘hoosier’ (Mike was the lone participant to offer an openly critical stance, while others either remained subdued in their critique, boastful about their position as ‘hoosiers’, or generally indifferent). In other words, the research context was such that it would have been difficult for any participant to feel comfortable with my presence (as a white, male, researcher from abroad) to offer critical commentary; particularly when we had only just

met. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that qualitative researchers can perhaps address this concern by meeting with participants on more than one occasion. That way, the interviewer begins to build trust with the interviewee so that he/she can explore otherwise deep and sometimes challenging topics. Unfortunately however, time and financial constraints did not allow for this.

However, through Mike's revelations it was clear that he employed techniques to contest 'hoosiness'. For example, as mentioned, Mike remains constantly subject to a gaze that seeks to know and define his Othered status. In his interview, he spoke to how frustrating he found the question (which he has faced his entire Indiana-life): "where are you from?" Sometimes, Mike confessed, he gives fictitious answers to see how people will treat him differently depending on what "race" they believe he is. Other times, he will proclaim he is from Milan, IN, Indiana, or the United States – despite knowing it is not the answer people are looking for. Showing signs of resignation, however, he admitted that it was a rare occasion when he did not have to eventually acquiesce and provide the answer originally sought by the initial inquisitor. Additionally, Mike spoke to the way he was "lump[ed] in as a ... white guy" (Personal Interview) from his hometown, making it difficult for him to contest any regime of power. Last but not least, protesters gathered to oppose proposed immigration legislation (SB 590) with little success as the bill was eventually passed; and there continues to be groups speaking out against a proposed statue of a slave to be erected in Indianapolis's downtown core (the second of its kind, and only the second representation of a black body in the state's capital). Clearly then, resistance is far from being non-existent and emerges at both the individual and public level. Nonetheless, given the complexity of this matter – and the limited amount of

information that could be gleaned from a six week period of fieldwork – future research is required.

Limitations and Future Research

It is a significant limitation of this study that more was not able to be gleaned and/or written about with regards to resistance to the ‘hoosier’ identity; and thus marks a critical space for future research. However, it is not the only limitation that exists. Another important limitation of this study is found in the lack of younger interview participants. Access to this group of people became extremely difficult in both Martinsville and Indianapolis for a variety of reasons (my potentially dangerous ‘outsider’ status; parental suspicion and anxieties; lack of bodies in Indianapolis, etc.). Being able to hear the voices of younger generations of ‘hoosiers’ and ‘non-hoosiers’ can bring forth a more nuanced understanding for the way(s) this identity becomes learned and meaningfully thought of. Surely, the racialized experience of Keith (who grew up during an intensely segregated era) is different than the 16 year old basketball player for Crispus Attucks High School today.

Another limitation stems from the comparative (and therefore dichotomized) nature of this study. There are inherent tensions that arise as a direct result of this methodological choice, to which I now redirect my attention. To begin, the intricacy and plurality underneath which ‘hoosier’ body politics operate are far from being neatly polarized along simple binaries of rural/urban, small-town/big-town, white/black, etc. Although both the word and basketball culture make use of these bifurcated systems, it is important to remember that people’s own processes of subjectification and internalization are complex and “messy”. Consequently, one should be careful so as to not make the

overly simplified reading that Indiana's small towns harbour racism whereas big-city, metropolitan centres act as perfect spaces of inclusion. Instead, I hope to have illustrated monolithic notions of 'hoosier' and 'hoosier basketball' as problematic attempts to create a unified, normalized body politic whereby certain bodies are privileged over Others in the defining of that culture.

In addition to this limitation stems the fact that Martinsville already carries with it a "racist" connotation in the minds of many Indiana natives. Those who reside in cities other than Martinsville have benefitted from being able to point/accuse from afar whilst suggesting that they themselves have no similar issue to confront. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. As I've stated, Martinsville was chosen as a research site in large part due to its demographics and geography; but also the fresh wounds caused by accusations of racism through which citizens have been asked to negotiate their 'hoosier' selves. My intent is not to reinforce the idea that racism only exists in Martinsville (though I do recognize the contextually unique histories, experiences, demographics, etc. embedded within the town). Instead, I hope to have illuminated the cultural politics associated with a deeply embedded *hoosier* culture underneath which people from all towns and cities are subject. In Martinsville's case, how did residents negotiate other parts of their identity (e.g. small-town; rural; working class; white) underneath the discourses of 'hoosier'? And, what meanings do they inscribe to their bodies as a result of these 'hoosier' discourses?

Despite having planned to restrict my analysis to Martinsville and Indianapolis, things became far more complex upon entering the field. What is presented in this thesis goes far beyond this simple dichotomy. I spoke to many people who did not live in either

of these locations. Some merely worked in one location or the other. Others grew up in different parts of Indiana (or from outside the state), drawing upon those experiences to forge their opinions today. As such, there is no such thing as a “pure” Martinsville subject, a “pure” Indianapolis subject, or a “pure” Indiana subject for that matter. Instead, people experience life floating between these fixed categories.

Discussion

I should be clear that it is not my intention to characterize all of Indiana’s white bodies as a collection of embittered racists. The ‘hoosier’ identity most certainly comes to encapsulate a more complex set of racial politics than merely locating one as “racist” or “anti-racist”. Moreover, it is important that one look beyond the individual to understand the deeper cultural forces at play underneath which discourses of ‘hoosiness’ maintain and reproduce racialized hierarchies. As noted, I do not want to suggest that Martinsville exists as a confined space for the reproduction of ‘hoosier’ whiteness. In light of some highly publicized/reported “incidents of racism” (e.g. 1998 high school basketball game; 1997 middle school football game; 1968 Carol Jenkins murder, etc.), Martinsville is looked upon by some ‘hoosiers’ as a place where “racism exists” while other Indiana towns and cities seemingly detach themselves from the implicating effects of a deeply embedded, *statewide* (and national) culture structured upon racialized inequalities. This position is seriously flawed, because every town or city (big or small; rural or urban) within Indiana is subject to a history of racism (Madison, 2001) through which contemporary ‘hoosiers’ formulate their cultural identities. How they come to negotiate

that history and the politics inscribed therein is what remains of utmost importance today.⁸²

Martinsville's histories pertaining to basketball and whiteness – and more importantly, the way citizens understand and embody those histories today – provide us with a valuable look into the cultural politics of twenty-first century 'hoosierness'.

It is clear that Indiana's basketball culture still relies upon the belief of an imagined 'hoosier' community that now belongs to a bygone era. Borne out of an intensely segregated landscape, the imagery of five white, rural, small-town farmboys (and the deeper meanings attributed to these privileged bodies) continues to exert power by way of its symbolic hold in the collective 'hoosier' memory. Constructed as the "true" embodiment of 'hoosierness', citizens are not only called upon to support these players, but also the values they apparently stand for. The closer a team comes to representing the idealistic and nostalgic portrait of authentic 'hoosier' basketball (memorialized through the 1954 state championship) the more likely they are to be produced through 'hoosier' discourses. One such example came in the form of the 2010 Butler University men's basketball team. The roster, primarily comprised of white student-athletes from across Indiana, was produced underneath a "hoosiers" narrative by the local and national media alike. Through a close reading of newspaper articles written about Butler's team, it was clear that those white bodies (out of the nine players born in Indiana, eight were white (not including the coach)...many from small towns) were the "authentic" 'hoosiers' of the team; while all but one of the remaining black players were born outside Indiana's borders. Consequently, as these representations of 'hoosierness' signifies a real or

⁸² Martinsville was chosen as a research site for this reason. Because of the town's relatively recent and highly publicized racial "incidents", it was believed that citizens would make clear their negotiations with these difficult histories that remain fresh in their minds.

genuine “Indiana” – or more aptly, a vision of Indiana that ‘hoosiers’ wish to see and/or regulate – it becomes clear that Indiana’s basketball culture plays a fundamental role in the normalization of white ‘hoosier’ body politics. Citizens are called upon to unproblematically associate with the romanticized imagery of this dominant narrative, and to become part of the imagined ‘hoosier’ community embodied by white players on the floor.

Indiana’s basketball culture has therefore been claimed by the ‘hoosier majority’ and similarly produced as a realm to celebrate and perform the meanings ascribed to their white bodies. As such, it is a tradition that commands respect and disciplinary tactics by those who seek to become “true” citizens of Indiana. Replacing the legendary Bob Knight (a man who continues to act as a celebrity-symbol of ‘hoosierness’) as head coach of the Indiana University (IU) Hoosiers in 2000, the black Mike Davis eventually resigned in 2006 noting his inability to collectively and effortlessly earn the support of fans (like his predecessor). Moreover, Davis went on to suggest that “Indiana needed one of its own to lead the program”, alluding to the symbolic powers afforded to white bodies in Indiana’s (basketball) culture (Whitlock, 2006). A black Indiana native himself, writer Jason Whitlock called upon his experiences growing up in the ‘hoosier state’ to provide Davis with some retroactive advice:

Davis needed to kill the Knight supporters (and the bigots) with unbridled love of all things Hoosier, even the hokey, old-school traditions. He could cry and bitch at home, but his public statements should’ve expressed a deep desire to be Indiana’s head coach and a willingness to immerse himself in Indiana’s unique basketball culture (Whitlock, 2006).

Thus, as Whitlock proclaims, ‘outsiders’ must conform to the established status quo both on and off the basketball court so as not to disrupt or challenge the normalized ‘hoosier’ centre. A similar incident took place at Ball State University (located in Muncie, IN), after Ronny Thompson (son of legendary coach and civil rights activist, John Thompson) was hired to coach the men’s basketball team. After only one year of coaching, Thompson received racist letters prompting his resignation just three weeks after receiving the hateful remarks. Once again, he was chastised by the local media for not disciplining himself according to ‘hoosier’ body politics:

“I think there was a definite East Coast arrogance about him,” said longtime Muncie Star Press sportswriter Doug Zaleski, who covered Thompson’s 15-month tenure at the school. “Just my feeling. I don’t think he really liked it here, don’t think he fit in here. He was kind of the square peg in a round hole.” (Forde, 2007).

Made hypervisible in their differences to ‘hoosier’ whiteness, Indiana’s basketball sporting culture continues to reify Otherness by marking bodies such as those belonging to Mike Davis and Ronny Thompson ‘outside’ the normalized ‘hoosier’ identity. During my time in Martinsville, a black teenage girl from Bloomington, IN sang the Star-Spangled Banner before a basketball contest in Martinsville High School. According to reports, she was criticized by the community for not singing the anthem in a more “traditional” or “recognizable” fashion. Moreover, “some who complained also said they felt the rendition was disrespectful to current and former members of the military” (Associated Press, 2011). Asked to make sense of the event, the teenaged Sara said: “She changed it up a little. She was singing it like – I don’t know – culturally, I guess is the

best way to put it” (Personal Interview). For Sara, the more “traditional” rendition of the anthem she had become accustomed to hearing was not representative of any culture; while the black teenage girl’s arrangement was constructed as such. In towns where the population remains overwhelmingly white (such as Martinsville), it is not surprising to hear that young children see their own ‘hoosier’ bodies as raceless and normalized. Culture, therefore, exists ‘outside’ the invisible ‘hoosier’ centre, while those on the ‘inside’ come to merely articulate a position of being “just human” (Dyer, 2008).

Although white, neo-Conservative ‘hoosier’ identity politics might seem to be an inevitable result of Indiana’s basketball culture, we might benefit from taking a more pluralistic view of the sport. Granted, the high school game (i.e. ‘hoosier hysteria’) has been called upon throughout Indiana’s history to elucidate the cultural significance ‘hoosiers’ derive from the sport. But such thinking is extremely limited in scope, and reinforces many of the same racial politics that originally helped to structure the sporting culture in the first place. In other words, such attempts to define a unitary culture fail to take into account alternative experiences. Therefore, most fundamentally it is important that Indianans seek to critically reflect upon their white bodies and the power/privileges inscribed therein. The imagined ‘hoosier’ community that has forever remained bound to Indiana’s sporting culture is nothing but a mythologized falsehood meant to perpetuate and reinforce racialized ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ both on and off the court. Rather than continue to define “true” ‘hoosiness’ through Indiana’s high school basketball tradition (a sporting sphere dominated both historically and contemporaneously by white males with the purpose of maintaining their power), Indiana’s pickup game might act as a revolutionary alternative space...apart from the restrictive and normalizing impositions

that inundate ‘hoosier hysteria’. An interesting fact that I had not come across in my research was revealed by Keith. He recalled that he and his teammates from Crispus Attucks would drive to white neighbourhoods in Indianapolis and play pickup basketball with other teenagers from the town – oftentimes inviting them back to the basketball court (nicknamed the “dustbowl”) at Lockfield Gardens (an Indianapolis housing project). They did not divide themselves into teams of black versus white – as was/is so often the case in the formal high school game today. Instead, they played with one another:

Keith: We’d get out and start playing; we’d always put a couple of those guys on a team with us. We would never play all together and try to dominate.

Scott: Oh, so you’d mix them up?

Keith: Yeah. And so, we got to be friends with a lot of those guys. We’d go over and play “you guys come and play” – and we got some of them to come over and play at Lockfield man (Personal Interview).

Existing apart from the hypercompetitive, mediated, and racially structured sporting culture of ‘hoosier hysteria’, a more tolerant and free form of Indiana basketball emerged that has since been forgotten in the contemporary moment. As McLaughlin (2008) argues: “Pickup basketball is a rough democracy, created by the players and for the players, and in that sense the game finds its purest expression on the schoolyard” (p. 16). By encompassing the pick-up game into a more pluralistic conception of Indiana basketball, the notion of a *pure* ‘hoosier’ aesthetic can perhaps become less bound to a set of white identity politics, and instead articulate a progressive force for social change.

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Appendix A



The Hoosier's Nest by Marcus Mote

Appendix B



The “Squirrel Stunt”

A technique used during Indiana’s so-called “pure” basketball history.
Picture taken at the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame.